Bengaluru Friday, January 16, 2026 Pages 14 Vol 79 No 16 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Karnataka's title run halted

Mokhade century takes Vidarbha past defending champions in Vijay Hazare semis

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Business P.11

State realised Rs 4.71L cr investment in 11 months: M B Patil

State

Will not be away from state politics: HDK P.4

World

European troops arrive in Greenland P.10

World

Grok blocked from undressing images P.10

India to start evacuating citizens from Iran

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India is set to start evacuating its citizens from Iran, where a crackdown on people agitating against the theocratic regime has escalated the Islamic Republic's tensions with the US.

The MEA is making preparations to facilitate the return of Indian nationals who wish to travel back to the country, a source said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval to use all available means to ensure the safe return of Indian nationals from Iran, another source said, adding that while commercial flights could be used first for evacuation, the assets of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy might also be deployed later.

Trump sees crackdown easing

US President Donald Trump said he had been told that killings in Iran's crackdown on protests were easing and that he believed there was no current plan for large-scale executions, adopting a wait-and-see posture.
Details on Page 10

Key takeaways from hearing

- SC says ED allegations "very serious"
- State police told to protect CCTV footage of raids
- Bench says central agencies have no power to interfere with election work of any party
- However, it says agencies can't be restricted from probes
- Centre's counsel says there is a pattern in Mamata's actions
- ED counsel seeks FIR against Mamata, DGP and Kolkata police commissioner
- Counsel for Mamata questions maintainability of plea, says similar plea filed in HC

I-PAC raids: SC stays Bengal FIR against ED

Says there would be lawlessness if it doesn't examine the 'serious' issue

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee leads a protest against the ED, in Kolkata. PTI FILE PHOTO

> "Larger questions are involved and have been raised, which, if allowed to remain undecided, would further worsen the situation, and there will be a situation of lawlessness prevailing in one or the other state
>
> SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court on Thursday said there would be lawlessness in the country if it does not examine the issues raised in the Enforcement Directorate's plea alleging obstruction and interference by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the state police chief during the raids at the political consultancy firm I-PAC's office and its co-founder Pratik Jain's residence in Kolkata on January 8.

"We are of the prima facie view that the present petition has raised a serious issue relating to the investigation by the ED or other central agencies and interference by state agencies. There would be lawlessness in the country if we do not examine the issues raised by the ED," a bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Vipul M Pancholi said.

It also stayed the proceedings in the FIR lodged by the West Bengal police against the ED officers who conducted the searches in connection with alleged money laundering in a coal pilferage scam.

The bench opined it was necessary for it to examine the issue to ensure adherence of the rule of law in the country and to allow each organ to function independently.

The top court issued notices to Banerjee, West Bengal government, DGP Rajeev Kumar and others, and sought their replies within two weeks on the central agency's petition seeking a CBI probe into the matter.

The court directed the West Bengal government to preserve the CCTV footage of the premises searched and the surrounding areas.

The matter is posted for further hearing on February 3.
▸ SC on ED raids, Page 5

TMC, BJP in war of words

The TMC and the BJP on Thursday traded barbs over ED's raids and the SC observations. TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said the party would not comment on the "technical legal aspects" of the case. The BJP termed the court's observations a "serious indictment" of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her government.

SC slams commotion in Calcutta HC

The apex court slammed the commotion caused in the Calcutta HC on January 9 during a hearing of the ED's plea against alleged interference by the state government during its searches. The top court was told by the ED's counsel that messages were spread and vehicles were arranged to bring people to the court.
Details on Page 8

K'taka drafts Bill to punish culprits of 'honour' killings

Move after murder of Hubballi woman by her family

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka government is drafting a law to punish those causing "grievous hurt" to a couple or any one of them in the name of "honour" with rigorous imprisonment of at least 10 years, which may be extended to life imprisonment, and a fine up to Rs 3 lakh.

The Karnataka Freedom of Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition Bill, 2026, comes against the backdrop of the murder of Manya Patil in Hubballi, allegedly by her own family for marrying a person from a Scheduled Caste (SC) community.

The proposed law has also been called 'Eva Nammava Eva Nammava Kanoonu, 2026,' named after a famous Vachana by 12th-century reformer and anti-caste advocate Basavanna. This name is said to have been suggested by Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HL Patil.

According to section 3(1) of the Bill, "All persons shall have the right to autonomy over their own lives, including the rights to liberty, freedom of expression, and freedom to marry a person of their choice".

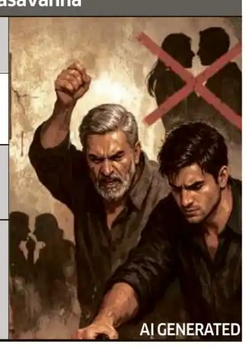
Section 3 (3) explains that the consent of parents, family, caste or clan is not necessary once two individuals agree to enter into a marriage.

The Bill imposes a minimum five-year imprisonment in addition to the punishment under Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS) for those killing in the name of honour.

SALIENT FEATURES

Bill to be called 'Iva Nammava Iva Nammava Kanoonu, 2026' after a vachana by Basavanna

- Minimum 10-yr RI for grievous hurt to couple or one of them
- Minimum 5-yr RI alongside punishment under BNS sections
- Man to be punished with 5-yr RI for sexual intercourse by 'false promise of marriage'
- Govt to provide shelter to couples
- Iva Nammava Vedike in each district
- Special fast-track courts to try cases coming under Act



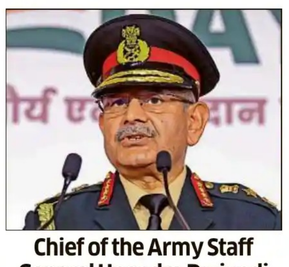
AI GENERATED

False marriage promise

It also criminalises sexual intercourse by false promise of marriage in inter-caste alliances with a rigorous punishment of at least 5 years of imprisonment, which may be extended to life imprisonment and a fine.
▸ 'Honour' killings, Page 5

'Army evolving into a future-ready force'

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS



Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on Thursday. PTI

The Indian Army is evolving into a "future-ready force" with soldiers capable of operating in multiple domains and the next two years will be spent in making the troops more technologically empowered, Chief of the Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi said on Thursday.

Gen Dwivedi said the force was preparing for "future forms of warfare", for which new structures like Rudra brigade, Ashni platoons, Shaktiban regiments and Divyastra batteries were created to operate in a complex environment.

"The Indian Army is steadily evolving into a future-ready force, with empowered soldiers, modern support systems and the ability to operate effectively across multiple domains," he said at the Army Day parade in Jaipur.

"Technology is being used to enhance decision-making and situational awareness, while keeping the soldier firmly at the centre of operations," Gen Dwivedi said.
▸ Army Chief, Page 5

FIERY CELEBRATION

Sankranti celebrations in Bengaluru's Jnana Ganga Nagar with the traditional practice of 'Kichchu Haisodu' on Thursday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

With users also in the dock, drug cases see sharp rise in K'taka

DH SPECIAL

MANJUNATH SHETTAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Drug-related cases shot up by 63% in Karnataka in the last year, from 4,188 in 2024 to 6,824 in 2025, according to data accessed by *DH*.

While the rise is alarming, the state police attribute it to their crackdown yielding results.

According to state police statistics, the number of foreign nationals hauled up for drug-related cases shot up, whereas the number of Indians accused dropped, marginally though.

While 114 foreign nationals were arrested for drug-related offences in 2025, a 54% rise from 74 in 2024, the number of accused Indian nationals dropped by 11%, from 3,237 to 2,874, in the corresponding period.

The number of peddlers rose 12% from 2,274 to 2,564 in a year, but the number of drug users booked spiked 60%, from 3,902 to 6,245.

Speaking to *DH*, Director General & Inspector General of Police (DG & IGP) Dr MA Saleem said that in 2024, the police largely refrained from booking cases against drug users, adopting a humanitarian approach focused on de-addiction and rehabilitation. "However, in 2025, we took a much tougher stand to curb the drug menace across Karnataka. This is why more cases were registered against users in the state. We have also intensified vigilance and action against drug peddlers," he said.
▸ Drug cases, Page 5

Karnataka drug case arrests (2023–2025)

Year	Cases	Indians	Foreigners	Peddlers	Users
2023	6,767	6,254	83	2,935	5,967
2024	4,188	3,237	74	2,274	3,902
2025	6,824	2,874	114	2,564	6,245
Total	17,779	12,365	271	7,773	16,114

Exit polls predict Maha Yuti win in BMC

MUMBAI, DHNS: Will the BJP be able to grab the reins of BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation and dethrone the Thackerays who have controlled the civic body for over a quarter of a century?

Indications are that this may happen, if one goes by the exit polls.

Winning Mumbai has been a major challenge for Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. However, exit polls predicted that the BJP and its Maha Yuti allies — Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ramdas Athawale-led RPI (A) — will get somewhere between 130 and 150 seats.

Around 50% polling was recorded in Mumbai on Thursday. Vote count will begin at 10 am on Friday.
Details on Page 8

SC rules against Tiger Global in landmark Walmart deal tax case

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court has ruled that Tiger Global's $1.6 billion stake sale in e-commerce firm Flipkart to Walmart is subject to taxes, handing a win to New Delhi in a landmark ruling on companies' use of international tax treaties.

Keenly watched by foreign investors, the dispute relates to how the US investment firm used the India-Mauritius tax treaty to claim tax exemptions and New Delhi's fierce objections to it. **Page 11**

India's trade deficit widens to $25.04 bn in Dec

NEW DELHI, DHNS: India's trade deficit widened to $25.04 billion in December due to subdued exports amid geopolitical challenges and trade restrictions, even as a top official claimed that the country and the US are "very close" to concluding a deal that would lower tariffs.

India's exports increased by 1.87% to $38.51 billion in December, from $37.80 billion recorded in the same month of the previous year. The country's goods imports climbed to $63.55 billion during the month under review, as per data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday. **Page 11**

CRACKING DOWN

Cops send a loud message: Student fined Rs 1.1L for modified silencer

MANJUNATH SHETTAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Traffic police in Bengaluru are sending a loud and clear message to owners who illegally modify silencers of their vehicles.

In a first-of-its-kind action, an engineering student was fined a whopping Rs 1.11 lakh for modifying the silencer of his car and causing public disturbance. The massive fine would have hurt, considering the value of the second-hand car is just Rs 70,000.

The Hennur Traffic Police wrote to the Regional Transport Office (RTO) officials to impose the fine to deter future violations.

The violator, a native of Kerala, ran afoul of the public when he was driving the car in the vicinity of the Bharatiya City Mall in Hennur Traffic police station limits on January 2, with the vehicle emitting flames and loud noise.

Passersby recorded the act and tagged the police and also shared it on social media. Acting swiftly, traffic police traced and seized the vehicle.

The Hennur Traffic Police personnel with the seized car. CREDIT: BTP

A senior police officer told *DH* that instead of registering a case, the traffic police referred the violation to the Yelahanka Regional Transport Office (RTO). Upon inspection, RTO officials confirmed that the car had an illegally modified silencer, which was not only excessively noisy but also emitting sparks, creating panic among motorists.

"The modification was a clear violation of the Motor Vehicles Act. It posed a serious risk and caused public nuisance. We can invoke provisions under the law to impose hefty fines when the offences are severe in nature such as this one," the officer told *DH*.

Despite attempts by several politicians to influence the police to release the vehicle after collecting a minimal fine, the Bengaluru city police stood their ground.

RTO officials levied the maximum permissible penalty of Rs 1,11,500, which the student paid on Wednesday, following which the vehicle was released. He was carrying valid driving licence and had come to city to meet his friends, the police said.

Costly error

The 21-year-old student took nearly 12 days to arrange the fine amount by borrowing money. During this time, a middleman approached him, offering to settle the case and demanded Rs 50,000. "The student informed us about it, and we advised him to pay the full fine directly to the RTO and obtain an official receipt," a senior police officer said.

Quickly

AI plane engine suffers damage at Delhi airport

An Air India plane, which was headed to New York but returned to Delhi following closure of Iranian airspace, suffered damage on Thursday when its right engine sucked in a cargo container at the airport here amid dense fog. While the Airbus A350 landed safely, officials said the flight sustained damage to its right engine after ingesting a cargo container.
Details on Page 9

Alert in J&K after drone sightings

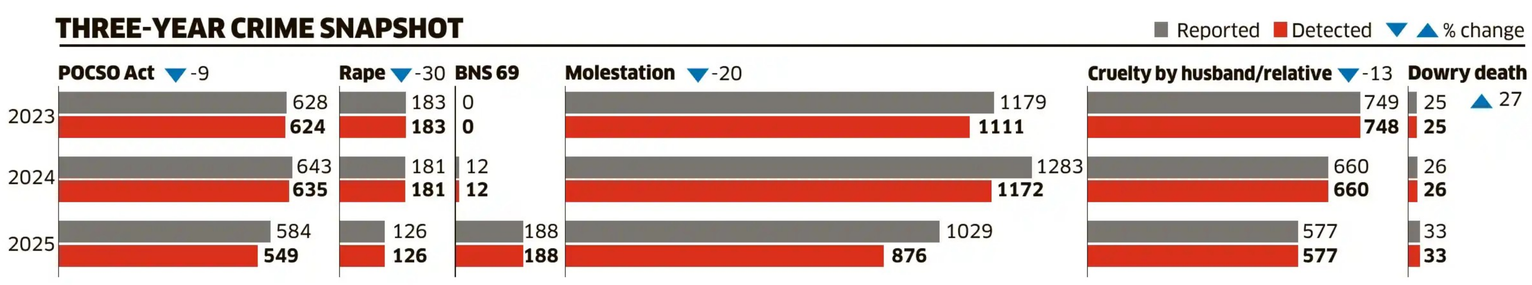
Security forces in Jammu & Kashmir were put on heightened alert on Thursday evening after multiple suspected Pakistani drones were spotted along the Line of Control (LoC) and the India-Pakistan International Border (IB), prompting swift responses and intensified surveillance in sensitive sectors.
Details on Page 8

India, EU eyeing defence & security ties

India and the European Union are likely to launch a security and defence partnership, in addition to clinching a trade deal, later this month when PM Modi will host the 27-nation bloc's leaders.
Details on Page 8

India warns Apple of antitrust case

India has issued a final warning to Apple that it will proceed in an antitrust case against the US tech giant as the company has delayed responses to officials for over a year and undermined the investigation. Apple has said it fears it could be fined up to $38 billion if India's competition watchdog uses its global turnover calculation for penalties.



POCSO cases dip in B'luru, but new law redefines rape cases

Sexual intercourse by deceit no longer rape under BNS

DH SPECIAL

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Crimes against children have dipped in the city, while the new Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has reshaped rape case registration.

Cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act fell by 9% in 2025, while rape cases saw a significant shift.

Initial police data showed a decline in rape cases, but deeper analysis reveals an increase of 71% in 2025 due to the BNS, which replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC) on July 1, 2024.

Section 69 of the new law addresses sexual intercourse by deceitful means, such as false marriage promises. Earlier, these could be treated as rape under IPC sections 375 and 90. As a result, sexual assault cases, including rape, in Bengaluru reached 314, nearly double the 2023 figure (183).

"In most POCSO cases, the victim knows the survivor, ensuring a high detection rate. Police act swiftly due to the law's provisions and the nature of the crime. Detections deter but will not alone reduce cases," said a senior Bengaluru police officer.

"Another factor is families approaching the police after learning of adolescent relationships. Since a minor's consent is invalid, any sexual act is statutory rape," he added.

There are two aspects to understanding crimes against women, said a senior officer. Case numbers have declined, but reporting has increased due to legal provisions such as identity protection and in-camera hearings.

"There has been a change in pattern: violent crimes against women have come down, but sexual assaults by deceit have risen. However, BNS Section 69 is sometimes misused to settle personal scores," another senior Bengaluru police officer said.

The officer added that increased deterrent measures, especially improved patrolling and surveillance, led to a 20% decline in molestation cases in 2025.

Officers said that while police enforcement is strict, societal intervention is key to curbing dowry deaths and cruelty by husband/relative cases. Dowry deaths rose by 27%, while cruelty cases declined by 13%.

SWEET BEGINNINGS

Tamilians prepare traditional Pongal as part of Makar Sankranti celebrations at KS Garden in Sudhama Nagar on Thursday. DH PHOTO/KRISHNAKUMAR PS

Rs 21 lakh on Day 1 at Lalbagh show

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden drew 32,950 visitors on Thursday, generating ticket revenue of over Rs 21 lakh.

The show, themed 'Tejaswi Vismaya' and dedicated to writer KP Poornachandra Tejaswi, saw 24,950 adults, 3,750 children and 4,250 school students attend.

Scrap godown fire in Begur sparks panic, damages migrant sheds

BENGALURU, DHNS

A major fire broke out at a scrap godown in Begur, near Bannerghatta Road, in the early hours of Thursday, gutting scrap materials worth a few lakh rupees. No casualties were reported.

Police said thick smoke billowing from the spot triggered panic in surrounding areas, including Akshay Nagar, Yelenahalli and Begur.

Preliminary investigation suggests the fire began after dry garbage was set ablaze and spread to the scrap material stored at the site.

A senior police officer said the incident occurred around 3 am when some families living on adjacent open land allegedly set fire to dry waste, leading to the mishap.

Fire and Emergency Services personnel rushed to the spot with four fire tenders and managed to douse the flames after nearly two-and-a-half hours of operation.

Around 40 families from West Bengal have been living on nearly five acres of open land nearby and had erected temporary sheds.

At the same spot

Residents said a similar fire incident occurred at the same location about two months ago, after which the families were asked to vacate the area. They reportedly returned a few days ago and rebuilt the temporary structures.

Two of these sheds were also gutted in the fire, police said.

Residents alleged the families were involved in refilling LPG cylinders illegally.

"We are verifying these allegations and will initiate legal action if the claims are found to be true," the officer said.

The Begur police have registered a case and further investigation is underway.

Police also dismissed allegations the families were from Bangladesh, clarifying they are migrants from West Bengal.

End of the don era & rise of unpredictable gangs

City sees shift from territorial control to impulsive violence

MANJUNATH SHETTAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The city's underworld has changed in the past two decades, shifting from area gangs to fragmented groups driven by land disputes and fast money.

Retired Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ashok Kumar said until the early 2000s, the underworld operated through territorial control, with dons exercising authority over localities.

Kumar said the real estate boom after 2000 altered the crime ecosystem.

Land prices and ownership disputes became key triggers for violent crimes, including murders. "Land remains the main motive behind murders," he said.

Financial disputes and personal enmity follow.

The traditional "don culture" has weakened in the past decade. In its place, younger, loosely organised criminals have emerged, often lacking hierarchy or control.

"Earlier, there was fear of the gang leader and police. Today, crimes are impulsive, often committed by young men with no long-term vision."

He attributed this shift partly to the rise of technology and mobile communication, which have enabled criminals to coordinate faster and remain elusive.

Pressing concerns

Another senior officer raised concerns about the policing system, saying transfers, political interference and prolonged inquiries have weakened enforcement. "Earlier, hierarchy and accountability were strong. Today, constant transfers disrupt investigations and affect morale."

Kumar said crime in Bengaluru has not reduced, but just changed form. "From organised underworlds to fragmented violence, from dons to unpredictable youth gangs — crime has evolved, but land and money remain at the core."

Another officer from the CCB said that traditional gang rivalries have reduced. Many offenders are now trying to switch to more lucrative businesses such as real estate or other trades.

Authorities are keeping a close watch on rowdy-sheeters attempting to leave the country.

"Clearance is denied, lookout notices are issued, and in some cases, passports are seized following court orders," police said.

The Bengaluru police have launched night patrols and area dominance operations in the past two months. Teams check sensitive areas, verify known troublemakers and take action under relevant sections of the law.

"Even in cases where complainants hesitate to come forward, we act based on credible intelligence and invoke preventive provisions to maintain public order," the officer said.

Four arrested in rowdy murder case; manhunt on for others

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bandepalya police on Thursday arrested four suspects in connection with the murder of rowdy Mohammed Shabbir (30), who was hacked to death in Mangammanapalya on Monday night.

Police teams have been dispatched to Hyderabad and Maharashtra to trace the remaining accused, who are absconding.

According to the police, two special teams were formed immediately after the murder.

Two suspects were detained soon after the incident, while two more were arrested on Thursday. "We will reveal the identities of all the arrested accused once the entire gang is nabbed," a senior police officer said.

Police said that around 10.30 pm, Shabbir was returning home in an autorickshaw with five associates when the assailants, who were aware of his routine, followed him.

The gang intercepted the autorickshaw and allegedly threw chilli powder into the eyes of Shabbir and his associates before attacking them with machetes and other lethal weapons. In the FIR, the suspects have been identified as Noor, Nadeem, Salman, Ali, Ismail and Siddique.

Preliminary investigations suggest the murder was premeditated and linked to a long-standing rivalry.

Shabbir, a history-sheeter at the Koramangala police station, had more than 15 criminal cases, including attempted murder and robbery, registered against him in Bengaluru and Shivamogga.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No.: CAO/CN/BNC/168/2026 Dated 12.01.2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Providing facilitation to competent Authority for Land Acquisition (CALA) under the Railway Act,1989 work to Railway Projects of Quadrupling works between Hosapete and Bellary (65km) stations in Hubballi Division of South Western Railway-Calling of open tender. **(Tender Ref. No: CALA-HPT-BAY-QUADRUPLING)**	Rs. 77,46,193.00

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 03.02.2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/ Works/Bengaluru Cantt.
PUB/824/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26
Download the UTS Mobile App from Google Play Store for ease of booking of unreserved tickets
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

PUBLIC NOTICE

The public are hereby notified that our client proposes to purchase the immovable property detailed in the Schedule hereto and hereinafter referred to as **"the Schedule Property"**:

We hereby call upon any person(s) having any right, title, interest, claim or demand against or in or upon the Schedule Property, or any part thereof, by way of grant rights, occupancy rights, inheritance, succession, bequest, mortgage, possession, sale, gift, exchange, lease, sub-lease, license, assignment, tenancy, lien, charge, encumbrance, trust, maintenance, easement, development rights, transfer, arrangement, settlement, lis-pendens, attachment, rights under a judgement, decree or order of any court of law, contracts, agreements or otherwise howsoever, to make the same known to the undersigned within **10 (ten) days** from the date of publication hereof, failing which such right, title, benefit, interest, claim and/ or demand, if any, shall be deemed to have been non-existent, waived, released, relinquished and/or abandoned, and our client will proceed to purchase the Schedule Property on the basis that no person has any claim on and/or any objection to the purchase of the Schedule Property by our client.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing No. 23/3-1, including the residential structure constructed thereon, situated at 8th 'A' Main Road, Rajamahal Vilas Extension, Bengaluru, previously comprised in Bangalore Mahanagar Palike Ward No. 99 (old Division No. 82, currently comprised in Greater Bengaluru, New Ward No. 35, Aramanenagar, measuring East to West 40'-0" feet (Forty Feet) and North to South 78'-0" (Seventy Eight Feet) together with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever underneath or above the surface and bounded on the:
East by : Property bearing No. 23/B;
West by : Property bearing No. 23;
North by : 8th 'A' Main Road; and
South by : Property bearing Nos. 24 & 24A

MD&T Partners, Advocates,
367, 14th Cross, Sadashivanagar,
Bangalore 560 080, Karnataka.
Phone no. 080-41520682/3/4
Email: srikanth@mdtpartners.com

Rasthe Habba in Richmond Town

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Citizen Welfare Association of Richmond and Langford Town, in collaboration with BLR Hubba, is organising a day-long neighbourhood festival across the park and streets of Richmond Town on Sunday.

Titled 'RichLang Rasthe Habba', the event will begin at noon and feature a flea market showcasing homegrown and eco-conscious brands.

Live performances by artistes such as Vasu Dixit, The Flute Boxers and Shingeri Melam will add to the festivities.

In keeping with its eco-friendly focus, attendees are encouraged to carry their own water bottles, bags and containers. Food at the event will be served in reusable steel utensils.

The festival will also include curated activities for senior citizens and children, along with an animal adoption drive. The event is pet-friendly.

Streets alive, all day
- **When:** Sunday
- **Time:** 12 pm to 8.30 pm
- **Where:** Richmond Town Park and surrounding streets

GBA launches 'Hejje Gala', an active mobility challenge for corporates

BENGALURU, DHNS

To reclaim the city's streets from vehicular gridlock, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) on Thursday launched 'Hejje-Gala', a three-month active mobility challenge for the city's corporate workforce.

The initiative began with a two-km walk from the Vidhana Soudha to the GBA Head Office.

Over 40 corporate leaders and senior officials participated, clocking one lakh steps to show that walking is a viable mode of transport in the city centre.

Led by GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao and BDA Commissioner P Manivannan, the event sets up a city-wide competition between tech hubs and industrial estates. Employees in the Outer Ring Road (ORRCA) and Electronics City (ELCIA) are encouraged to log walking and cycling trips on the Altmo app.

A live leaderboard will track companies by participation, distance covered, and carbon emissions saved.

"We want a healthy competition where companies like Infosys or Cisco vie for the top spot," said Srinivas Alavilli of WRI India, a partner for the event. Such engagement, he said, could lead firms to invest in local infrastructure such as better footpaths.

Participants at the two-km walk from the Vidhana Soudha to the GBA Head Office, marking the launch of 'Hejje-Gala'. DH PHOTO/ASHWIN BM

The challenge is also a data-gathering mission.

Maheshwar Rao said inputs from the app would identify infrastructure gaps. This data will help the authority redesign streets based on commuting patterns.

Pawan Mulukutla, Executive Programme Director at WRI India, said active mobility is crucial for the city's transit future.

With the Namma Metro network set to reach 250 km, last-mile connectivity is key.

"About 65% of Metro users already walk to stations. We need to make that experience safe and inclusive," Mulukutla said.

While the challenge runs through April, some civic bodies have started work.

North City Corporation Commissioner Sunil Kumar said 34 km of footpaths in his zone have been revamped, with a target of 100 km soon.

The launch included companies such as Intel, Dell, Siemens, Biocon, and Amazon Web Services. Interested companies can register at hejjegala.in.

BDA to auction 83 sites on 'as is, where is' basis

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) will e-auction 83 corner and intermediate sites formed in layouts developed several years ago.

The sites, meant for residential and commercial use, will be auctioned on February 17 and 18.

Interested applicants have been asked to submit their applications by February 13. The e-auction process will commence on January 27, with the sites being sold on an "as is, where is" basis.

The BDA has published the locations of the sites along with their geo-coordinates on its website. When bids are opened, the minimum bid increment will be in multiples of Rs 500 per square metre.

The layouts where sites have been identified for sale include Arkavathy Layout, Banashankari 6th Stage, JP Nagar 9th Phase and Anjanapura Extension, among others. The BDA undertakes such auctions almost every month or two.

SPEED VS SAFETY

Gig workers seek end to 10-minute delivery promise

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Pointing to several years of marketing quick delivery, gig workers have urged platforms to publicly denounce 10-minute delivery to reset consumer expectations.

The prolonged campaign to deliver products at their doorsteps quickly has had a "psychological impact", gig workers say.

Following a nudge from the Union Labour and Employment Ministry to discontinue 10-minute delivery amidst concern on gig workers' welfare, Blinkit dropped the promise of quick delivery earlier this week.

Meanwhile, a survey by Local Circles has shown that 61% of consumers in Bengaluru support the government move. Out of the 16,245 people surveyed, 31% said they did not want 10-minute delivery. Even among those who wanted it, medicine delivery topped the list, followed by essential and discretionary items.

"Blinkit quietly dropping the 10-minute claim means nothing when the ground reality remains the same," 48-year-old delivery worker Muzakir told *DH*.

"The company has not yet come forward and said that they will be stopping 10-minute delivery.

Board & fund rollout soon

Labour Minister Santosh Lad told DH that the Gig Workers Welfare Board will come into effect by February.

"We are at an advanced stage of bringing both the Welfare Board and the fund into motion," he said.

Once implemented, the welfare fee will be collected and automatically deposited into the Gig Workers Welfare Fund, he further said.

"Our uniform still says the same tagline, and consumers continue to expect 10-minute delivery from us," Muzakir added.

Most gig workers rush their delivery to get positive ratings from customers. "If a customer raises a complaint, it will have an impact on the worker's ratings, which will result in their IDs being blocked for a day," said Inayath Ali, president, Karnataka App-based Workers Union and national vice-president of the Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers Union.

The problem mostly lies with the food delivery platforms that do not consider delays by the restaurants and the pick-up time.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy called the Union government's nudge the right thing.

"This should cut the traffic violations by delivery workers," he added.

"When they are caught for violations, they always point to the incentives for quick delivery as the reason."

IN THE CITY

GENERAL

Bangalore Social Science Festival: Participants: Prakash Belavadi, Malavika Avinash, Pralhad Rama Rao, Swami Mitrananda, Guruprakash Paswan; Indian Institute of Management; 8 am onwards.

Kaladarpana Kittur Rani Chennamma National Award: Presented by CK Ramamurthy, awardees: Anupama Prasad, Ramya MK, Uma Narayan BM, Veda Prashanth, Vanitha, Gowriprabha Prasad; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; from 10 am onwards.

Founder's Day: Guests: Yaduveera Krishnadatta Wodeyar, Ravi D Channannavar, chaired by R Upendra Shetty; Universal Group of Institutions, Tavarekere; 5 pm.

Kavi Lakshmishar's 'Jaimini Bharata' lecture series: By Pavagad Prakasarao, participants K Sridhara Rao, S Raghunath, organised by Dr Pavagad Prakasaraya Amrutha Mahotsava Samiti; Sriram Mandir, NR Colony; 5.45 pm.

BLR Hubba Launch: In front of the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha; 5.30 pm.

CULTURAL

'Chudamani Lankadahana' Yakshagana Puppet Show: Bhaskar Kamath; BLR Hubba; Yuvak Sangha, Jayanagar; 7 pm.

Natya Rasa: Padmini Ravi; Venkatesh Natya Mandir; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 6 pm.

CITY WEATHER

FORECAST

Mist

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	30.0°C
Minimum	18.0°C
Rainfall	--
Humidity	82%
Sunset (Jan 16)	6:12 pm
Sunrise (Jan 17)	6:45 am
Moonrise	4:00 am
Moonset	3:30 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Committee on campus polls invites public opinion

BENGALURU DHNS: The committee constituted by the Karnataka Congress president D K Shivakumar for recommendations on re-introducing student elections at campuses, has decided to invite stakeholders' opinions.

The committee convener Dr Sharan Prakash Patil said that an email address will be shared with the public to send their opinions.

"Instead of gathering opinions from stakeholders individually, we have decided to create an email address and it will be open for all; anyone can share their views, opinions and suggestions," he said.

However, the committee has decided to meet on January 22 to discuss the issue further. "Intention behind bringing back campus elections may be good to create second-generation leadership, but stakeholders' opinion matters the most. Students, teachers, parents and student organisations associated with any political parties are free to send their opinion," the minister said.

The public can send their opinion to karstudentselections@gmail.com.

GBA polls: More seats, but women leaders weary of proxy culture

Out of 369, as many as 174 wards reserved for women

Women leaders have flagged nepotism, as male leaders often push their wives or female relatives as proxies.

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The last time Bengaluru elected corporators in August 2015, as many as 102 women entered the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), which then had 198 wards. With the formation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), creation of five corporations, and delimitation increasing the number of wards to 369, as many as 174 wards will now be represented by women.

The Supreme Court's directive to conduct the GBA polls before June 30 has evoked mixed reactions among women ticket aspirants. Even as they welcome the increase in reserved seats, women are weary of the "proxy" culture and rotation of reservation that discourage genuine women leaders from building their political base.

"BJP has no dearth of women candidates. In fact, each ward has 4–5 aspirants and candidate selection will be a tough task. A major criterion is her popularity and accessibility to the people," said Geetha Vivekananda, former BJP Mahila Morcha president and ex-corporator.

She added that the party keeps cadres engaged through people-connect programmes like blood donation drives, health camps and tree plantation activities. "But the long gap has certainly affected development work and corporators' engagement with people in many wards," she noted.

Restructuring challenges

Ward delimitation has fragmented existing wards. "Each ward which earlier had a population of 35,000 to 80,000 now has only about 20,000 people. The women reservation has not been applied equally," allege women leaders.

Calling delimitation a political exercise, Geetha said, "Old wards have been split to favour the ruling party. Some Assembly constituencies held by Congress legislators have fewer women-reserved seats to accommodate male party workers. My old ward, Vijnananagar, has been torn into five pieces."

Former corporator and BJP leader N R Ramesh said "women reservation stood at 47%, against the prescribed 50%."

The reservation matrix shows uneven distribution. BJP leaders allege that in Byatarayanpura and BTM Layout, represented by ministers Krishna Byre Gowda and Ramalinga Reddy, only five of 14 wards are reserved for women. But it is the same story in BJP-held constituencies like RR Nagar, CV Raman Nagar, Rajajinagar and Yeshwantpur (now Congress) too.

Women leaders have flagged nepotism, as male leaders often push their wives or female relatives as proxies. The five-year delay, leaders say, has cost an entire generation of grassroots women leaders.

Expelled Congress leader Kavitha Reddy said she was denied tickets in 2015 BBMP polls and again in 2018 and 2023 Assembly elections. "Barring a few serious contenders, women seats are occupied by relatives of male leaders. Women without a political background or mentor cannot get tickets on merit. Often, women are proxies for their husbands. Parties are not keen on nurturing women leaders, and women are trolled and intimidated, making it difficult to survive in politics," she said.

Former Mayor Padmavati said Bengaluru needs quality representatives. "Parties must give tickets to educated, service-minded women with knowledge of budget and grants. Women, once elected, should not rely on menfolk. Wards headed by women have seen fewer conflicts and better development," said the five-time corporator, adding that Congress would sweep the polls due to the impact of five guarantees on women and households.

Reddy, a faculty member of "Kranti Sangam," an AICC programme, stressed the need for training. "Politics remains male-dominated. Women are trained in Constitution, laws, gender justice, gender budgeting and mentorship across India, but Karnataka lacks such initiatives," she rued.

Take steps to prevent leak of exam papers, PU colleges told

Lapse could result in PU Edu Dept withdrawing affiliation

BENGALURU, DHNS

Amid the furore over the leak of the SSLC preparatory examination question paper, the Department of Pre-University Education has warned colleges of withdrawing affiliation should there be any such lapse on their part during the preparatory examinations for second-year PU students scheduled between January 19 and February 2.

Although no papers were leaked during the first preparatory examinations for second PU students, the department is understandably wary this time around given that question papers for the SSLC preparatory exams were uploaded on social media sites, and even a few YouTube channels. Eight people, including students and teachers, were arrested in connection with the leak after the Karnataka School Education and Assessment Board lodged a police complaint.

Warning students against uploading question papers on social media sites, a PU Department official said, "Action will be taken even if they upload fake question papers."

In the circular issued to all PU colleges, the department reiterated its rule forbidding students from using mobile phones on campuses. Principals have been instructed to take steps to ensure that students do not take their mobile phones into the exam hall.

Securing the papers

- Access to the printing press during printing of question papers must be restricted.
- Question papers must be packed and bound with a seal that cannot be tampered with.
- Once printed, additional copies of the question paper must be destroyed, and the soft copy of the file erased.
- Downloaded question papers must be watermarked with college code of nodal centres.
- Question papers must be downloaded using the same IP address, and the same computer.
- The question paper parcel must be opened in the presence of two students

Karnataka's ecotourism sector seeks scientific review & phased resumption of wildlife safaris

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka Eco-Tourism Resorts Association (KETRA) has sought a science-based review and phased resumption of wildlife safaris in Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserves with safety measures.

"KETRA has expressed deep concern over the prolonged suspension of wildlife safaris in Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserves, in place since 7-8 November 2025, which has coincided with the peak tourism season in Karnataka," it said in a statement on Thursday.

"While reiterating its full empathy for families affected by recent tiger attacks and acknowledging the need for robust human-wildlife conflict responses, the Association has appealed for an urgent, science-based review of the current blanket ban on safaris, emphasised that prolonged, open-ended suspensions without clearly articulated review mechanisms risk setting a precedent that undermines both conservation planning and livelihood stability in protected area landscapes," the statement added.

The association claimed that, according to their internal assessments and publicly reported estimates, the ongoing suspension has pushed Karnataka's eco-tourism belt into a severe financial and livelihood crisis.

"Member resorts and associated tourism businesses in the Bandipur-Nagarahole landscape are collectively losing around Rs 3 crore per day due to cancellations and reduced bookings, while Jungle Lodges and Resorts and the Forest Department together are estimated to be losing approximately Rs 60-70 lakh per day in safari-linked revenues and fees. Occupancies at several properties have dropped from pre-ban levels of roughly 75-80% in late 2024 to about 30-40% in the same period this year," KETRA added.

One arrested for poisoning leopard to death

CHAMARAJANAGAR, DHNS: The police have arrested a man on charges of poisoning a leopard that was found dead at Homma village, in Chamarajanagar taluk, on Wednesday.

Doreswamy of Homma village is arrested. He has been remanded in judicial custody.

It may be recalled that a six-year-old leopard's carcass was found in a decomposed state at Homma village on Wednesday. As a carcass of a calf was found at a little distance from the leopard, the Forest department, upon suspicion, sent the viscera of the leopard and the calf to the laboratory for testing.

As soon as poisoning was found to be the cause of death, the Biligiri Rangantha Swamy Tiger Reserve officials initiated a probe and arrested Doreswamy on Thursday. It is said that he had laced poison to the calf that had been killed by the leopard. More details are awaited.

Jawaharlal Nehru Centre For Advanced Scientific Research
Jakkur P.O., Bengaluru-560064, Karnataka, INDIA
An autonomous institution under Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India
An Institution Deemed-to-be-University

Advt. No: JNC/AO/01/2026 Dated:16.01.2026

Notification

JNCASR, invites applications for one position each of (a) Assistant Administrative Officer (b) Junior Accounts Officer (c) Junior Project Engineer and (d) Personal Assistant and three positions of (e) Junior Admin Assistant, on a direct recruitment basis.

Refer to the Centre's website for detailed advertisement and to download the application form (wherever applicable). https://www.jncasr.ac.in/openings/administrative-staff

The advertisement details and link to apply will be open to the public from 10:00 AM on 24.01.2026 onwards till the last date of receipt of applications i.e., 17.02.2026.

Sd/- Administrative Officer, JNCASR

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ

ಶ್ರೀ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ
ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು

ಶ್ರೀ ಡಿ.ಕೆ. ಶಿವಕುಮಾರ್
ಮಾನ್ಯ ಉಪ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು

ಕನ್ನಡ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು
ಕೈಗಾರಿಕಾ ವಲಯ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿವಿಧ
ಖಾಸಗಿ ಸಂಘ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವದಲ್ಲಿ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ 30ಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಸ್ಥಳಗಳಲ್ಲಿ 350ಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು
(ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಭೇಟಿ ನೀಡಿ https://blrhubba.in)

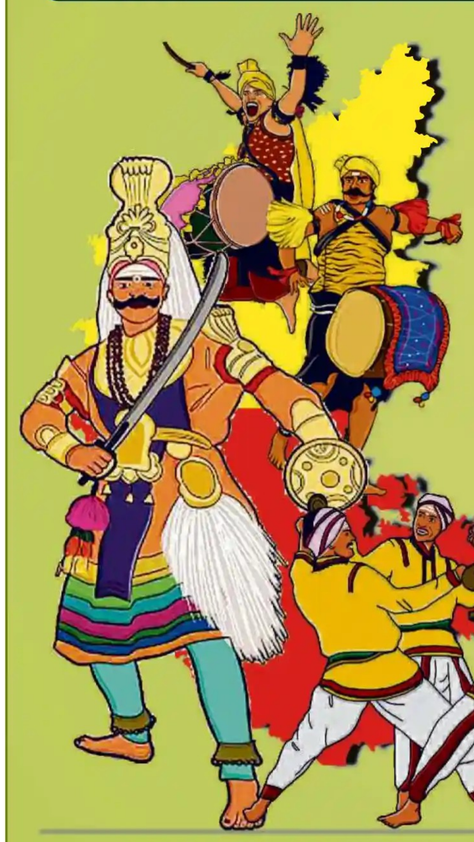
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಹಬ್ಬ – 2026
(ದಿನಾಂಕ 16.01.2026 – 25.01.2026)

ಉದ್ಘಾಟನಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ: ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.01.2026 ಶುಕ್ರವಾರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ | ಸ್ಥಳ: ವಿಧಾನಸೌಧದ ಭವ್ಯ ಮೆಟ್ಟಿಲುಗಳ ಮುಂಭಾಗ, ವಿಧಾನಸೌಧ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ
ಸಂಗೀತ ಹಾಗೂ ವೈವಿಧ್ಯಮಯ ಕಲೆಗಳ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನಗಳು, ಸ್ತಬ್ಧ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳು, ವಿವಿಧ ಜಾನಪದ ಕಲಾತಂಡಗಳು, ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಪೂರ್ಣ ಕುಂಭ, ಸಾಂಪ್ರದಾಯಿಕ ಉಡುಗೆ ತೊಟ್ಟ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ–ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯರನ್ನು ಒಳಗೊಂಡ ಮೆರವಣಿಗೆ

ಮೆರವಣಿಗೆಯ ಮಾರ್ಗ
ವಿಧಾನಸೌಧ → ಕಬ್ಬನ್ ಪಾರ್ಕ್ ಒಳಭಾಗದಿಂದ → ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಗ್ರಂಥಾಲಯ ಟೆನ್ನಿಸ್ ಮೈದಾನ → ವಿಕ್ಟೋರಿಯಾ ಪ್ರತಿಮೆ → ಅನಿಲ್ ಕುಂಬ್ಳೆ ವೃತ್ತ → ಮಹಾತ್ಮ ಗಾಂಧಿ ರಸ್ತೆ → ಮಹಾತ್ಮ ಗಾಂಧಿ ಮೆಟ್ರೋ ನಿಲ್ದಾಣದ ರಂಗೋಲಿ ಕಲಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರ

ಉದ್ಘಾಟನೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಜನಪದ ಕಲಾತಂಡಗಳ ಮೆರವಣಿಗೆಗೆ ಚಾಲನೆ
ಶ್ರೀ ಸಿದ್ದರಾಮಯ್ಯ
ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ



ಘನ ಉಪಸ್ಥಿತಿ
ಶ್ರೀ ಬಸವರಾಜ ಶಿವಲಿಂಗಪ್ಪ ಹೊರಟ್ಟಿ — ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಸಭಾಪತಿಗಳು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಪರಿಷತ್
ಶ್ರೀ ಡಿ.ಕೆ. ಶಿವಕುಮಾರ್ — ಮಾನ್ಯ ಉಪಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಶ್ರೀ ಯು.ಟಿ. ಖಾದರ್ — ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಸಭಾಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನಸಭೆ

ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷತೆ
ಶ್ರೀ ಶಿವರಾಜ ಎಸ್. ತಂಗಡಗಿ
ಮಾನ್ಯ ಹಿಂದುಳಿದ ವರ್ಗಗಳ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಹಾಗೂ ಕನ್ನಡ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಸಚಿವರು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ

ಮುಖ್ಯ ಅತಿಥಿಗಳು
ಶ್ರೀ ರಿಜ್ವಾನ್ ಅರ್ಷದ್
ಮಾನ್ಯ ಶಾಸಕರು
ಶಿವಾಜಿನಗರ ವಿಧಾನಸಭಾ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ

ವಿಶೇಷ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿತರು
ಡಾ. ಶಾಲಿನಿ ರಜನೀಶ್, ಭಾ.ಆ.ಸೇ.
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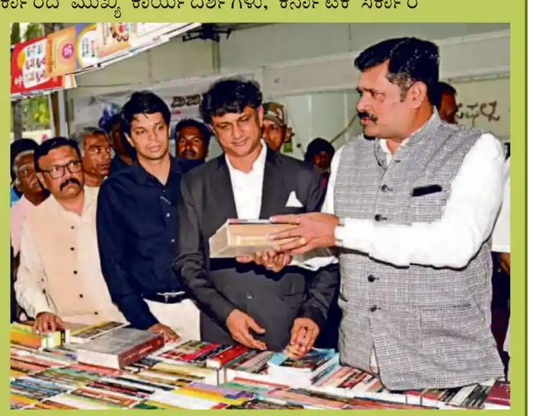

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ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಮಾನ್ಯ ಸಚಿವರು, ಸಂಸದರು, ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭಾ ಮತ್ತು ವಿಧಾನ ಪರಿಷತ್ತಿನ ಸದಸ್ಯರು ಹಾಗೂ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಆಯೋಗ ನಿಗಮ ಮಂಡಳಿಗಳ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರು ಮತ್ತು ಸದಸ್ಯರುಗಳು

ಸರ್ವರಿಗೂ ಆದರದ ಸುಸ್ವಾಗತ

ಜೆ. ಮಂಜುನಾಥ್, ಭಾ.ಆ.ಸೇ.
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ಕೆ.ಎಂ. ಗಾಯಿತ್ರಿ, ಭಾ.ಆ.ಸೇ.
ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಕನ್ನಡ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ

ನಮ್ಮ ವೈವಿಧ್ಯಮಯ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪರಂಪರೆಯನ್ನು ಗೌರವಿಸುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಕಾಪಾಡುವುದು ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಬ್ಬ ಭಾರತೀಯರ ಸಂವಿಧಾನಬದ್ಧ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಕರ್ತವ್ಯ.

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Vaikunta Samaradhane
(Shraddhanjali sabha)

Mr. V. Nagaraj
(Founder of Glow Homes)
Closer the people, harder the goodbyes.
Our beloved father, Mr. V Nagaraj departed for his heavenly abode on 05-01-2026, Monday. Kindly join us for the Shraddhanjali sabha to pray for his eternal soul.
Date : 17-01-2026, 11:30 A.M onwards
Venue
Sri Gurunarasimha kalyana Mantapa, Bull Temple Road,
Near Ramakrishna Ashrama circle, Basavanagudi, Bangalore 560004.
In reverence and remembrance
Glow Homes team and Mr. Karthik Nagaraj,
Mrs. Sujatha Nagaraj, Mrs. Kruthika Nagaraj & family members.

Spl session against VB-G RAM G is Cong's political compulsion: BJP

New law replacing MGNREGA triggers political confrontation

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka government's decision to convene a special session of the legislature to oppose the Centre's Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G Act) has drawn flak from the BJP, which dubbed it as a 'political compulsion' of the state Congress and 'Constitutional impropriety.'

The new law replacing the UPA's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has triggered a sharp political confrontation.

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy questioned whether a state legislature debating a law passed by the Parliament could help repeal it.

"The state government could have sought modifications or relief if the state could not afford to bear 40% share. Instead, they chose to oppose the Act and undermine the Parliament. Most importantly, the special session has been convened only to appease the Congress high command. A cabinet resolution would suffice to register their protest," said Narayanaswamy.

The LoP is partly right as the Supreme Court observation in the case of state legislatures passing resolution against a central act (CAA and farm laws) clearly stated that state legislatures had the right to pass resolutions but they were "merely opinions" and do not have the force of law.

Narayanaswamy also accused the Congress of double standards for scrapping BJP-era schemes like bicycles for girl students, scholarships for farmers' children and the Kisan Samman scheme.

"VB-G RAM G is only an improvised version of NREGA to curb misuse of funds. The enhanced state share will make state governments more accountable. We will debate it in the House and also educate people about the new Act," he added.

BJP MLA Sunil Kumar alleged that session was only meant to "divert" attention from the government's failures. "Law and order is in shambles. A special session that does not discuss people's problems has no meaning," he added.

RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge defended saying it was a constitutional necessity. Citing Article 258, he said that the Centre was obligated to consult states before launching centrally sponsored schemes that have financial implications.

"In this case, the state is expected to bear 40% of the cost. If a state rejects a central scheme, the chief justice of India should appoint an arbitrator. The process (enactment) is a violation of Articles 258 and 280 (related to Centre–State relations and Finance Commission)," Kharge added.

Beyond the legislative dispute, the NREGA Bachao campaign has acquired political overtones ahead of five major elections across the country this year.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar during a meeting of party workers said the campaign was a huge organisational "opportunity" ahead of the Zilla Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat polls, and warned office-bearers and MLAs to take the campaign seriously or face action.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah too called on Congress workers to turn the fight into a "people's movement," signalling that the party intends to take the issue beyond the legislature.

CHALAVADI NARAYANASWAMY
Opposition leader in the Legislative Council

"The state government could have sought modifications or relief if the state could not afford to bear 40% share. Instead, they chose to oppose the Act and undermine the Parliament. Most importantly, the special session has been convened only to appease the Congress high command. A cabinet resolution would suffice to register their protest.

Not keeping away from state politics, clarifies Kumaraswamy

BENGALURU, DHNS: Notwithstanding his position in the Union Cabinet, H D Kumaraswamy on Thursday made it clear that he had no intentions of keeping himself away from politics in Karnataka.

H D Kumaraswamy.

Kumaraswamy, who is the Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries, said that it was for the people to decide as to whether he should remain in state or central politics.

"If the will of the people is for me to return to the state, I will do so," the Union Minister told journalists in Bengaluru.

Queried about the possibility of being the NDA's Chief Ministerial face for the 2028 Assembly elections, Kumaraswamy said, "I will abide by whichever position the people bestow on me. It's not in my hands. Our aim is to bring the NDA to power. We are part of the NDA. There should be no confusion within the alliance."

Clearing any misconceptions about his role in state politics, the Union Minister added, "Those thinking that I am keeping away from state politics are wrong. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has entrusted me two portfolios, and I have my hands full managing them. I will decide to return to state politics when necessary."

Urging government officials to keep their consciences clean, Kumaraswamy said that pressure from elected representatives must not influence their actions.

"There are reports of officials involved in irregularities. If officials indulge in illegal activities to get the posting of their choice or for promotions, they will have to face the consequences. Officials must work with a clear conscience and within the framework of government regulations," he added.

S'ghatta incident: KPCC issues show-cause notice to Rajiv Gowda

'Congress leader's conduct, derogatory words had caused embarrassment to the party'

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) has issued a show-cause notice to Rajiv Gowda, the Congress candidate from Shidlaghatta in the 2023 Assembly elections, alleging his conduct amounted to indiscipline and was detrimental to the party's interests.

In the notice dated January 15, 2026, KPCC working president (administration) G C Chandrashekar stated that it had come to the party's notice that Gowda had made personal remarks against the Municipal Commissioner over the removal of a banner related to a private event during his telephonic conversation with the Commissioner and the audio and video clip of which was widely circulated in the media.

The notice stated that the Congress leader's conduct and derogatory words had caused embarrassment to the party and was a violation of the party discipline.

The KPCC called upon the member to submit his written explanation within seven days failing which the disciplinary committee will take an appropriate action.

It may be recalled that an audio clip purportedly capturing the Congress leader threatening Shidlaghatta Municipal Commissioner Amrutha Gowda over the removal of an "unauthorised" banner had sparked a political row in Chikkaballapur district. It had also led to civic body employees staging a protest demanding action.

The BJP accused the Congress of fostering a "goonda state," with state president B Y Vijayendra calling the behaviour towards a woman officer "unpardonable."

Zameer condemns Congress leader's conduct

Housing and Minorities Welfare Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan has condemned the alleged incident of Congress leader Rajiv Gowda threatening and abusing the Shidlaghatta Municipal Commissioner, reports DHNS from Harapanahalli.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a Sankranti event organized by legislator M P Latha Mallikarjun on the banks of Tungabhadra river in Harapanahalli taluk, Zameer said, "He should not have used such language against the officer. I strongly condemn it. The politicians should be courteous to the officers."

In ever loving memory of our
Beloved Father on his 25th Death Anniversary

Shri. K.C. Thagade Gowda
Retd. Executive Engineer (PWD)
02-05-1930 – 16-01-2001
From : Smt. Harinakshi (Sukanya) - Wife
T. Rohini & V.M. Chandre Gowda (Retd. M.D. Bescom)
T. Chethana & K. Arjun, Pallavi & Master Nyran
Dr. T. Nayana & A.S. Somaiah

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I, Prashant Gaonkar, S/o Krishna Gaonkar, residing at Ramakrishna Math, # 99/1, Bull Temple Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru-560019, have changed my name to SWAMI MAHISHTHANANDA vide affidavit dated 14-01-2026 before notary L. Puttaraju, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called SWAMI MAHISHTHANANDA only
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Tourism hub at Roerich Estate: High Court directs state, Centre to ensure no activities on ground

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka high court has directed both state and union governments to ensure that there are no developmental activities on ground at Roerich and Devika Rani Roerich estate in Bengaluru.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha passed this interim order while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by RR Nagar I Care Trust, Bengaluru.

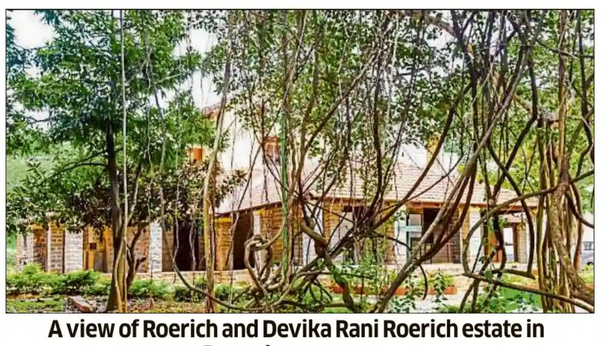
The petitioner challenged the approval granted for an Eco Tourism and Cultural hub project at the Roerich and Devika Rani Roerich estate on Kanakapur road. The petition stated that a December 24, 2024, notification has granted approval for the project.

According to the petitioner, the proposal states that space will be allocated for parking of nearly 450 cars in the estate and thousands of people are expected to visit the place. According to the petitioner, these activities will harm the ecology of the area as it abuts the Bannerghatta forest range, an elephant corridor. On July 25, 2025, the division bench had directed the authorities to respond to the petition.

On January 13, 2026, the counsel for the state government sought time to file a statement of objections. On the other hand, Shanthi Bhushan H, Deputy Solicitor General of India, appearing on behalf of the union government, submitted that no proposal is received regarding the project and at this stage, the project which is in question cannot be implemented. The bench granted time to the state authorities to file a statement of objections and adjourned the matter to February 16, 2026.

The petition stated the activities proposed are in violation of the orders passed by the Apex Court in the KT Plantation judgement in regard to the need for environmental protection in ecologically sensitive areas.

The petition further prayed for a direction to the Roerich Board to declare the estate as biodiversity heritage site or propose a conservation reserve for the remaining estate. The petitioners also sought a direction to the board to conduct a scientific profiling of environmental, ecological and wildlife factors of the estate and to develop a plan towards the object and intent of the acquisition of the estate.



A view of Roerich and Devika Rani Roerich estate in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO

SAD DEMISE

Smt. Kasthoori
wife of late G Krishna Reddy
Our hearts are filled with sorrow upon hearing sudden demise of ***Smt. Kasthoori,*** *who left for her heavenly abode on 15-01-2026. Funeral at Gowribidanur, Kasaba Hobli, Chikkaballapur District on 16.01.2026 at 1.00 pm*
Deeply mourned by
Family Members, Friends and Relatives
Mobile: 98440 06775, 99440 04466

Siddharamananda Swami.

Tinthini Kanaka Gurupeeth seer dies of heart attack

RAICHUR, DHNS: Siddharamananda Swami, the head of Tinthini Bridge Kanaka Gurupeeth, died of heart attack in the small hours of Thursday. He was 49.

According to the Peeth sources, the seer was rushed to a private hospital in Lingasugur after he complained of chest pain on Wednesday night. He breathed his last at 3.40 am on Thursday.

Born as Mohan Pradhan to Mahadevaiah and Jayamma at Kalamarahalli in Challakere taluk, Chitradurga district. the seer left his home at the age of 18 and embarked on a spiritual journey.

After spending some time at Murugha Mutt in Chitradurga and Sindhanur, he established Kaginele Kanaka Gurupeeth (of Kalaburagi division) near Tinthini Bridge in 2011.

The seer used to hold Halumata Samskruti Vaibhava in January, every year. This year, the event was organised from January 12 to 14.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah condoled the death of Siddaramananda Swami. In a post on 'X', the chief minister said his commitment to social upliftment along with religious activities makes his loss an irreparable one for the state.

"I pray that his divine soul attains eternal peace and that his devotees and followers are granted strength to bear this grief," Siddaramaiah said.

With users also being...

Drug cases, from Page 1

As a part of its renewed strategy, the state police have launched 'Sanmitra' (a good friend) — an initiative aimed at keeping a close watch on addicts while providing sustained support, rehabilitation and monitoring. The programme seeks to curb the growing menace of drug addiction among the youth through structured follow-up and intervention.

"Mysuru and Belagavi reported higher numbers of drug-related cases due to intensified area domination exercises and effective crackdowns on drug usage. However, Bengaluru city accounted for the highest number of drug peddlers arrested, with foreigners finding it relatively easier to operate in the city," Saleem added.

"Going forward, our focus is on making Karnataka a completely drug-free state in 2026," the state police chief said.

A senior officer told *DH* that the police are also keeping a close watch on the coastal belt to ensure drugs are not smuggled via port areas. "Squads and surprise checks at ports are the way forward," said an officer.

Impact of policy change

Mid-year, following a major policy shift aimed at choking the demand side of the drug trade, the Karnataka police began registering cases against drug users.

A senior officer told *DH* that the change in strategy was aimed at curbing the growing nexus between peddlers and consumers operating through social media and digital payment platforms. "Drug transactions were increasingly being coordinated through social media accounts, with payments routed via UPI and other online modes, making conventional enforcement ineffective," he said.

In Bengaluru, the policy of targeting peddlers and sparing users was changed in August 2025, when Seemant Kumar Singh took over as the city police commissioner. He issued directions that cases must be registered against users as well. Another officer said: "Awareness campaigns alone were not sufficient to curb the menace. It called for stricter surveillance, community participation and coordinated action against organised drug networks operating within and outside the state."

Awareness drives yield results

The anti-narcotics task force (ANTF) has intensified awareness programmes for young people. Its campaign focuses on door-to-door sensitisation. A senior police officer said the new strategy was aimed at engaging the youth in spaces they frequent the most. The awareness campaigns cover college campuses, social media (especially Instagram), and restaurants. The idea, they said, was preventive in nature.

LDF eyes Kerala poll gains with 2 new direct-benefit schemes

Norms for youth monthly scholarship scheme relaxed

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

As the Assembly elections approach in Kerala, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) is pushing forward with two direct cash benefit schemes from the government for women and youths that were announced earlier.

While the scheme offering Rs 1,000 per month to women has already witnessed significant participation, the norms for the monthly scholarship of Rs 1,000 to youths seeking jobs have been relaxed to ensure more beneficiaries come forward.

Direct-benefit schemes were often considered key influencing factors in elections, the latest instance being the "Mukhyamantri Mahila Rozgar Yojana" in Bihar. Even the ruling DMK in poll-bound Tamil Nadu recently announced a fresh direct cash benefit scheme.

The CPM-led LDF government in Kerala earlier announced the "Sthree Suraksha" (women's security) scheme, offering an assistance of Rs 1,000 per month to women in the 35-60 age group who are not covered by any other government welfare initiative.

Till last week, around 8.5 lakh women had applied for the scheme.

The government-announced "Chief Minister's Connect To Work" scheme targets youngsters. It offers a scholarship of Rs 1,000 per month to youth in the 18-30 age group for one year after completing studies, to help them undergo job-oriented training.

While the scheme was initially offered to those with a family income of up to Rs one lakh, the upper income limit has been hiked to Rs 5 lakh in order to ensure that more youths avail the scheme.

The response to the scheme was initially so bleak that only around 10,000 applied, whereas the government's target is 5 lakh. The scheme is likely to be formally rolled out this month.

The state government has already increased the welfare and social-security pension to over 60 lakh people to Rs 2,000 per month from Rs 1,600, and dues have been cleared.

The distribution of free grocery kits to all households for several months following the Covid-19 lockdown was one of the highlights of the first Pinarayi Vijayan government. It was believed to be one of the reasons that helped the LDF retain power.

K'taka drafts Bill to punish...

'Honour' killings, from Page 1

Any person who engages in sexual intercourse with an adult woman by giving assurance or promise of marriage, and subsequently refuses to fulfil such promise upon disclosure or knowledge of the woman's caste, shall be deemed to have obtained consent by deceitful means or under misconception of fact, thereby committing an offence punishable as rape under the draft Bill.

As per the Bill, if there is prima facie evidence that the refusal to marry was motivated "solely or primarily" by opposition to the inter-caste nature of the alliance, it is to be presumed (rebuttable presumption) that the promise of marriage was "false" from the inception or vitiated by "deceit". The Bill also notes that the burden to prove that the promise was made in "good faith" or was due to "unforeseen circumstances unrelated to caste" rests on the accused.

However, the Bill makes it clear that the above clause doesn't apply to cases of "genuine breaches of promise due to circumstances beyond control", or where the woman is aware from the outset that marriage was improbable on caste grounds.

Protection

The proposed legislation states that anyone exercising their rights under section 3, or being a victim under this Act, can seek protection for themselves, their dependents and witnesses against any kind of intimidation, or coercion or inducement, or violence or threat to violence.

The police must provide protection within six hours. The state government is also obligated to provide shelter to couples in need of shelter.

A senior official told *DH* that the Bill mandates the police to provide protection both in cases where marriage has already occurred and where it is likely.

The Bill states that the government should identify places where crimes in the name of honour have been reported in the last five years. It mandates the government to create a Special Cell to prevent such crimes in every district.

The Bill also empowers the district magistrate to constitute an 'Iva Nammava Vedike', which shall facilitate solemnisation of marriage, provide counselling services and function as prescribed.

The Bill also mandates setting up special fast-track courts for trying cases coming under its purview.

FOR THE HOLY DIP

A large number of people queue up on the banks of River Bhima in Abbe Tumakuru of Yadgir taluk for a holy dip on the occasion of Makara Sankranti on Thursday. DH PHOTO

Wild jumbo enters Gundlupet town; damages bike

GUNDLUPET (CHAMARAJANAGAR DIST), DHNS: A wild jumbo strayed into Gundlupet town, damaged a motorbike and roamed on the roads for a while, during the wee hours of Thursday. The incident is captured on the CCTV cameras, installed at a house in the town.

The wild jumbo walked on Marigudi street in Gundlupet town and damaged a motorbike parked on the road.

The Forest department acted swiftly and a team, led by ACF Suresh, and RFO Shivakumar, traced the footprint of the jumbo that was sighted at Gundlupet town and used thermal drones to observe its movements. They confirmed that the jumbo was around Beguru and Yeriyuru villages and monitored its movement. The jumbo then moved towards Heggavadi hillock under Kundukere range. The Forest department was successful in driving the jumbo back into the forest.

I-PAC raids: SC stays Bengal FIR against ED

SC on ED raids, From Page 1

Upon hearing Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the ED, and senior advocates Kapil Sibal, A M Singhvi and Shyam Divan, appearing for Banerjee and others, the bench also made it clear that central agencies cannot interfere with the election work of a political party. The court, however, said that central agencies cannot be restricted from bona fide investigations.

In his submissions, Mehta asked the court to take cognisance of the matter, as it was "a very very serious issue". He accused the West Bengal CM of indulging in theft, alleging that she not only took away evidence but also the phone of an ED officer, when she barged into the place where the search was being conducted last week.

"This will only encourage such acts and the central forces will be demoralised. The state will feel they can barge in and commit theft and then sit on dharna," he said.

"Let a message go once and for all," he said, also seeking suspension and departmental proceedings against the DGP and others who accompanied Banerjee.

Raju sought a direction for registering an FIR, claiming that it was a case of theft, robbery and dacoity. Since the head of the police is accompalice and Banerjee is Home Minister, a CBI probe was required. However, raising the issue of maintainability, senior counsel Sibal asked why there should be parallel proceedings when a plea was already pending before the high court. He said that there was a pattern of ED's interference in the states where elections are scheduled.

"What was the need to go there in the midst of the election? Last statement in the coal scam was recorded on February 24, 2024. What were they doing since then," he asked, justifying Banerjee's action as chairman of her political party during the search operations on January 8, 2026.

He claimed it was a blatant lie to claim all digital devices were taken away.

Singhvi, appearing for the state government and the DGP, also raised the issue of maintainability of the writ petition, by terming the instant plea as forum shopping, since a similar plea was pending before the high court.

In its plea, the central agency contended that "the chief minister of West Bengal has made a pattern to take law into her hands and misuse the state police whenever any crime is investigated which is not of her likings or which has the potential of some incriminating material against her, her ministers, her party workers or a few officials working in cahoots is likely to be found".

Claiming that the matter disclosed a shocking state of affairs, the agency said, it was forced to approach the apex court in view of the "extraordinary and unusual circumstances".

The ED alleged that the situation in West Bengal was serious and that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, along with senior police officials, including the DGP and the Kolkata police commissioner, were involved in cognisable offences that required registration of an FIR, as mandated by the Lalita Kumari Vs Govt of UP (2014) judgment of the Supreme Court.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast Jan 16: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	30	18.4	00
Bidar	30.2	15.8	00
Vijayapura	31.5	17.5	00
Dharwad	30.2	17.6	TR
Haveri	31.8	19	00
Kalaburagi	33.3	20.9	00
Raichur	32	18	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	32.8	21.4	00
Karwar	34.2	22.6	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	32.4	23.2	00

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	NA	NA	NA
Bengaluru	28.8	17.1	00
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	31.6	18.5	00
Davangere	32.5	16.5	00
Hassan	29.5	10.2	00
Mysuru	29.2	16.4	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	25.2	13.4	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	20	2.9	00
Kolkata	24.2	13.6	00
Mumbai	32.3	16.4	00
Chennai	31.2	22	00
Pune	31.7	14.2	00
Hyderabad	31.2	18.5	00
Th'puram	33.8	23.8	00

Govt mulls bill on preserving & digitising manuscripts available across state

It proposes Karnataka Manuscripts Authority to hold comprehensive survey

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government is contemplating tabling "The Karnataka Jnana Bhandar Manuscripts and Digitalisation Bill 2025," with the objective of preserving and digitizing manuscripts available across the state.

The bill envisages the state tourism department forming a Karnataka Manuscripts Authority which will conduct a comprehensive survey of manuscripts with their origins or linked to Karnataka, in public and private custody within the state and beyond.

The bill will empower the authority to survey, document, conserve, digitalise, research, publish and provide public access to the manuscripts.

Handwritten or palm leaf records, birch bark, paper, cloth, copper plate or stone inscriptions or any other material will be surveyed. The only condition is that they should not be printed nor lithographed in any other Indian or foreign script. Miniature paintings on palm leaf or paper and audio-visual recording of oral traditions regarding the ancient knowledge will also be undertaken for preservation of manuscripts.

Speaking about the bill, Minister for Law, Tourism and Parliamentary Affairs H K Patil said, "The bill is a first-of-its kind and people in possession of the manuscripts will have to self-declare the same to the government irrespective of the condition of the manuscript." However, after preservation and digitisation, the manuscripts will be returned to the owners and if under any circumstances the owners want to give up the manuscripts, the government will take up the ownership.

Devaraj A, Commissioner of Department of Archaeology, Museums, and Heritage, told *DH*, "We will take the manuscripts and conserve them. If the owners do not want to publicise the content of the manuscripts, it will remain private. A token of appreciation will also be provided certifying ownership of the manuscripts."

Experts, who have been in the business of collecting and preserving manuscripts, said that preservation can be achieved only through a combination of stable temperature, pest control and proper storage.

"After retrieving manuscripts, they are put through a process of de-acidification and fumigation. This process must be carefully done by an expert to make sure nothing is overdone. Else, it will destroy what is recovered," said the expert, who didn't wish to be named. "We convert the retrieved manuscript it into a form that can be digitized, using specialized techniques and materials to stabilize fragile paper and inks," he added.

H K PATIL
Law & Tourism

"The bill is a first-of-its kind and people in possession of the manuscripts will have to self-declare the same to the government irrespective of the condition of the manuscript.

Four youths drown in separate incidents

BAGALKOT/RAICHUR/DANDELI: Four youths drowned in water bodies in three separate incidents in the state on Thursday. They met watery grave while taking bath on the occasion of Sankranthi festival.

Pramod Mahantesh Badiger and Manoj Manjunath Badiger (both aged 18 years) of same family went to take bath in rain water accumulated in a mining pit near Lokapur in Bagalkot district. They slipped and drowned in the shallow pit.

Nawaz Naika (18), who had been to River Kali for a bath with his friends, was caught in strong current and drowned. Police retrieved his body from the river.

Surendra Reddy Rajaladinni (28) of Manvi in Raichur district drowned when he had been to River Tungabhadra for a bath on the Sankranthi day. Police visited the spot.

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್ ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:28/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12–01–2026

ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಉಪವಿಭಾಗಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಡುವ ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ:2059–80–053–4–00–200 ವಿವಿಧ ಇಲಾಖಾ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳ ದುರಸ್ಥಿ/ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ, 5054–03–101–0–02–132 ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ರಸ್ತೆ ಸೇತುವೆಗಳು, 5054–80–190–0–01–132 ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಸ್ತೆ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ–ಬಂಡವಾಳ ವೆಚ್ಚ (ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮುಖ್ಯ ರಸ್ತೆ ಸೇತುವೆಗಳು), 4059–80–051–0–60–132 ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಯವರ ಮೂಲಸೌಕರ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಇತರೆ ಬಂಡವಾಳ ವೆಚ್ಚಗಳು, 8443–00–117–0–16–542 ಠೇವಣಿ ವಂತಿಕೆ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಒಟ್ಟು 28 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ವಹಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಅಥವಾ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಿರುವ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ (Standard Tender Document KW–1,2&4ರಂತೆ) ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಲಗತ್ತಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು, ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಗೆ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ 3ರಲ್ಲಿ ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ಕನಿಷ್ಟ ಅರ್ಹತೆಗಳಿದ್ದರೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ವಹಿಸ ಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಕನಿಷ್ಟ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.5.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಗರಿಷ್ಟ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.415.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಆಗಿರುತ್ತವೆ. ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿರುವ 28 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ (ಇ.ಸಂ.ಖ್ಯೆ:28891 (ನೇ ಕರೆ) ದಿನಾಂಕ:21.01.2026 ಇ.ಸಂ.ಖ್ಯೆ:31231,30738, 31897, 31817, 31808, 31816, 30585, 30737, 30924, 30467, 30711, 30751, 30741, 30717, 30087, 32187 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23.01.2026 ಇ.ಸಂ.ಖ್ಯೆ:32222, 32224, 32223, 28290, 32107 ದಿನಾಂಕ :29.01.2026, ಇ.ಸಂ.ಖ್ಯೆ:30039, 29387, 29379, 30712, 30026, 29320 ದಿನಾಂಕ :02.02.2026 ರಂದು) ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕು, ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಷಯ ನಿರ್ವಾಹಕರನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಿ ತಿಳಿಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly owned Government of Karnataka undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal)

The Chief Engineer Ele., Bangalore Metropolitan Area South Zone, BESCOM, Bengaluru invites tender for the following Civil Engineering work coming under Bengaluru Metropolitan Area Zone through e-Procurement portal in two cover system. For Enquiry No: **BESCOM/2025-26/BD/WORKS_INDENT 843 Name of the work:** Tender for the work of Construction of Third Floor and Other allied works for N-3 Sub Division and O&M unit-9 Section office of Rajajinagar Division at Rajajinagar Industrial Town, BESCOM, Bengaluru.

Estimated Amount: **Rs. 199.85 Lakhs,** Estimated Amount put to Tender: **Rs.169.34 Lakhs (Approx)** Earnest Money Deposit details: **Rs. 2.55 Lakhs.**

Pre bid meeting date and time: 23.01.2026 @ 15:00 Hrs. Last date & Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications: 27.01.2026 upto 17:30 Hrs. Last Date & Time for Receipts of Tenders: 31.01.2026 upto 11:00 Hrs. Date & time of Opening Technical Bid: 02.02.2026 at 11:30 Hrs. Date & Time of Opening Price Bid: will be intimated after Technical Evaluation to the Responsive Bidder.

The details regarding participation in the tender can be obtained through e-Procurement by visiting website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Karnataka Public Procurement portal on or after **16.01.2026**. For any clarification contact e-Procurement helps desk **+91-8046010000, +91-806894877** Or E-mail to **support@ihelpdesk.com**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Ele),
Bengaluru Metropolitan Area South Zone,
BESCOM, Bengaluru

For any BESCOM related Complaints Call: 1912
Please Download BESCOM Mitra Mobile App

India needs a 'rocket-missile force': Army Chief

Army Chief, from Page 1

More new formations may be in the offing, with the Indian Army receiving 31 government approvals for raising new formations including the long awaited integrated battle groups.

Earlier this week, the Army Chief also underscored the need for a dedicated rocket force, which is in existence in China and Pakistan is setting up one. "Yes, we need a rocket-missile force. It is a need of the hour that we should raise a similar force," he said.

Missiles like Pinaka (120 km), Pralay (400-500 km), Brahmos (290-800 km) and other rockets could be a part of such a force. The missiles and rockets in the army inventory are currently handled by the Corps of Air Defence and artillery regiments.

In place since 2016, China's People Liberation Army Rocket Force is considered a potent unit that can launch missile attacks against high value targets. Post Operation Sindoor, the Pakistan Army has begun the process of raising a rocket force command to strengthen its long range strike capabilities.

Gen Dwivedi said the next two years would be observed as the 'years of networking and data centricity' for further improving the connectivity, information flow and coordination across the force, enabling timely and well-informed decisions. The land force showcased its weaponry and new technologies at the Army Day parade in Jaipur.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the government was equipping the armed forces with indigenous, state-of-the-art weapons and platforms tailored to India's needs.

"The world is going through a period where all established notions are being challenged. In such a situation, it is more important than ever to bolster the armed forces and ensure their modernisation and self-reliance," he said.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP portal only)

BWSSB invites Tenders from eligible contractors for the following Works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (UWP), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.

Division	IFT Number	Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last Date & Time for submission of tender	Date & Time for opening of tender
WWM-P-V. Valley	BWSSB/EE(WWM-P) V.V/AEE-2/AE/07/ 1859/2025-26 Date : 13.01.2026	Rs.21,97,000/- / Rs.50,000/-	29-01-2026 upto 5.00 p.m.	30-01-2026 at 5.15 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWM-P) V. Valley.

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.

Building	BWSSB/EE(Building)/ PB/3229/2025-26 Date : 06.01.2026/ (2nd Call)	Rs.10,06,707/- / Rs.25,200/-	23-01-2026 upto 4.00 p.m.	27-01-2026 after 4.00 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Building).

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the signed office during working hours. DIPR/CP/AAPL/RO5043/25-26

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

A promise revived, but doubts persist

The residents of Bengaluru have been effectively disenfranchised for over five years, ever since the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) council's term expired in 2020. This prolonged suspension of democracy is the result of repeated political and administrative manoeuvring aimed at bypassing the constitutional mandate for local self-governance. Last week, the Supreme Court directed that elections to the corporations under the newly constituted Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) be completed by June 30, 2026. While the order has revived public hope, scepticism remains, as successive governments have reneged on their promises, securing repeated extensions from the courts by citing pending issues of ward delimitation and OBC reservations. These technicalities have served as convenient pretexts to defer polls, allowing the state to maintain a grip on the city through bureaucratic proxies. While citizens are left without a mechanism for grievance redress, this arrangement also serves a political purpose, as local MLAs have developed a vested interest in the *status quo* to maintain absolute control over ward-level expenditure. Ironically, while Bengaluru contributes the lion's share of the state's revenue, its taxpayers have no say in how that money is spent at the ward level.

Bengaluru civic polls signal hope amid a governance vacuum. The Court must ensure that the deadline is met

The Supreme Court's stand has been unequivocal. In cases like *Kishan Singh Tomar v. Municipal Corporation of the City of Ahmedabad* and *Suresh Mahajan v. The State of Madhya Pradesh*, the Court held that failure to hold local body elections on time amounts to a constitutional breakdown. It ruled that delimitation cannot justify delay: if new ward boundaries are not finalised, elections must be held based on the old ones. Even the 'triple test' for OBC reservations was not meant to stall polls indefinitely; if incomplete, the seats are to be notified as general category. Yet, despite laying down these sound principles, the Court's own practice of granting extensions and entertaining repeated restructuring has effectively handed state governments a *carte blanche* to defer the electoral process.

Given this history, it is natural that doubts about the June 30 deadline persist. A draft reservation list for 369 new wards has now been published, and the inevitable flurry of objections has commenced. This should not be used as another excuse to postpone the polls. The Supreme Court must enforce its orders so that no government – in Karnataka or elsewhere – stifles local democracy at its whim. The residents of Bengaluru have a right to be governed by their own representatives. Local self-government is not a form of State-sponsored charity; it is a constitutional guarantee that has been denied for far too long.

New timelines for safe delivery

The decision by quick commerce platforms to do away with their 10-minute delivery commitment may be considered a qualified success of the campaign to put an end to the practice, which placed delivery agents under tremendous pressure. Since last month's strike by gig workers that highlighted poor working conditions, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya spoke with the companies, urging them to remove fixed delivery-time commitments from their branding and marketing campaigns. Concern was also rising over the impact of these commitments on the safety of the delivery agents. Working under tight schedules, the agents end up navigating peak traffic hours, often fearing the consequences of a delayed delivery. It poses risks not only to the agents but also to other road users, as seen in a spate of accidents.

But, according to reports, the situation on the ground has not changed much. The platforms have, of course, stopped making claims of time-bound delivery as part of their promotions. What has changed is the messaging; the word about quick delivery, which was clearly and loudly made through branding communication, advertisements, and social media campaigns. These platforms are yet to acknowledge that the rush to meet unrealistic delivery timelines leaves the agents under immense pressure and disrupts urban traffic systems. A counter-narrative asserts that the business model does not rely on the delivery partners' riding speed, but on the location of the dark stores. The key factors that influenced delivery timings, it is argued, are the number and spread of the dark stores, availability of delivery partners, routing technology, and order batching.

Explicit 10-minute promises may be on hold, but real change will happen only with policy reform

It is known that all these factors work on one another and together create stressful work schedules for the agents. At the heart of the issue is a demand-and-supply dynamic. Customer expectations of early delivery and the availability of agents who are ready to undertake such deliveries, often under financial compulsions, are factors that drive the business. It has been argued that the situation may improve if the dark stores are mandated to be located away from residential areas, a model followed in some of the European cities. But there is no assurance that such moves can make life easier for the delivery agents. Claims of quick delivery may not be made in public now, but the orders are unlikely to slow down. The takeaway from this pause is an official acknowledgement of concerns raised by the gig workforce. It remains to be seen if it leads to a comprehensive policy with worker welfare at its centre.

PLANTING FOR PROFIT?

Rule change brings new risks to India's forests

Defining monoculture as forestry may cause severe ecological damage and derail conservation efforts

GIRIDHAR KULKARNI

In a move that has sparked alarm among environmentalists, retired forest officials, tribal rights advocates, and legal experts alike, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has quietly re-engineered the guidelines governing forest land in India. On January 2, 2026, the Ministry issued a circular redefining how plantation and afforestation activities on forest land are classified, effectively de-linking them from long-standing environmental safeguards such as compensatory afforestation and Net Present Value (NPV) charges.

Under the amended guidelines – framed within the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, the law that now replaces the Forest Conservation Act – government and non-government entities can undertake plantations and afforestation work on forest land, so long as they align with working plans of the state forest department. These activities are now categorised as "forestry activity", thereby exempting them from the requirement to compensate for ecological loss or pay NPV, a charge historically used to internalise the environmental costs of diverting forest land.

On the surface, this may appear to be a bureaucratic technicality or a policy tweak to boost green cover. But the implications go far deeper, and potentially far darker.

Plantations – especially commercial ones – are not equivalent to natural forests. While forests support complex ecosystems with rich biodiversity, carbon sequestration, soil stability, and water regulation, monoculture plantations of fast-growing species such as eucalyptus, teak, or acacia deliver far fewer ecological services. They are designed for timber, pulp, and other extractive economic uses, not habitat health. Experts have warned that incentivising such plantations on forest land could irrevocably alter soil quality, reduce groundwater recharge, and displace indigenous flora and fauna.

The new guidelines allowing commercial plantations directly conflict with ongoing efforts to restore native forests. Across many forest areas, the extraction of teak, acacia, and eucalyptus is being carried out under approved working plans to rehabilitate degraded lands and encourage natural regeneration. Even these carefully managed interventions, however, have unintended ecological consequences: monoculture plantations often facilitate the spread of invasive weeds such as *eupatorium, lantana*, and *senna*, which outcompete native species and reduce habitat quality. The new policy, by promoting additional commercial monocultures without safeguards, risks undermining these restoration efforts and further compromising ecological resilience.

The stripping away of compensatory afforestation and NPV requirements – which both serve as ecological and financial safeguards – fundamentally alters the balance between conservation and commercial interest. These mechanisms ensured that when forest land was diverted, measures were taken to restore equivalent ecological value elsewhere, funded by the project proponents themselves. Removing them hands an enormous advantage to private and public actors alike, giving them a free rein to cultivate and profit from forest land with little accountability.

This shift does not occur in a vacuum. The debate over opening forest land for corporate plantations has simmered for decades, resurfacing periodically as India's demand for paper, timber, and wood products has grown. Previous proposals – such as leasing millions of hectares of degraded forest to private companies – were shelved amid concerns over forest-dependent livelihoods and environmental degradation. The current change in rules risks reopening that conflict.

Critically, this policy shift takes place against the backdrop of broader legal changes to the Forest Conservation Act over the past three years. Amendments passed in 2023 – now incorporated into the Van Adhiniyam – have already been criticised for weakening key protections, narrowing the definition of forest, and potentially diluting compliance with the Forest Rights Act, which recognises the role of tribal and forest-dependent communities.

The future of forest governance

Forest governance in the country has always been a complex interplay of ecology, economics, and rights. Tribal communities and village gram sabhas have fought long and hard for legal recognition under the Forest Rights Act, asserting their custodianship over forests and the resources they depend on. Yet, by facilitating private plantation activity on forest land with minimal environmental safeguards, the government risks sidelining the very communities that have traditionally acted as stewards of these landscapes. This is especially concerning in regions such as central and eastern India, where indigenous peoples' livelihoods, food security, and cultural identity are closely tied to forest ecosystems.

The official line from the MoEFCC insists that these changes are intended to help achieve India's ambitious target of 33% forest cover and to bring in additional resources for restoration work. There is merit in mobilising resources for genuine forest restoration. But conflating commercial plantations with ecological restoration confuses ends with means. The danger is that in pursuit of headline metrics such as tree-planting numbers, India will lose the substance of its forests: their biodiversity, ecological functionality, and the livelihoods of those who depend on them.

The recent changes should not pass without robust public scrutiny. Forest policy ought to be transparently debated, informed by science, and rooted in constitutional and legal commitments to environmental protection and community rights. Diluting protections in the name of expediency or economic convenience sets a perilous precedent, one that jeopardises India's ecological security and violates the stewardship responsibilities owed to future generations.

We should all be wary of policies that prioritise commercial plantings over living forests. India's forests are more than raw materials; they are irreplaceable reservoirs of biodiversity, carbon storage, and climate resilience. Once lost or irreversibly altered, these natural systems cannot be replaced by monoculture plantations. Protecting them is not just a policy question; it is a moral and ecological imperative.

Replacing living forests with monocultures is not conservation; it's a corporate lease on nature.

(The writer is a wildlife conservationist)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

A Class One rebellion

I walked into my school and walked out just as quickly

M S VAIDYANATHAN

With my admission to class one in the school where my elder sister was studying, my father would have heaved a sigh of relief at having discharged his primary parental duty. I was huddled into a classroom with some thirty-odd students and made to sit on the first bench, facing a petite young lady – my class teacher – who was frantically trying to bring the class to order. Some children were crying, some were refusing to accept the cookies the lady was offering, and I, of all of them, ran out of the classroom – in sheer desperation – towards freedom and in search of my sister for moral support and comfort. Having spotted her in a classroom on the same floor, I dashed inside and sat next to her on the bench, much to the bewilderment of all present, especially the 'lady' who had been chasing me all the way.

She quietly dragged me out, exchanging courtesies with her counterpart in my sister's classroom, and physically lifted and carried me in her arms to a small room where an elderly person was seated – he was the principal of the school – who enquired of the lady carrying me what the problem was. All the while I felt suffocated and cried aloud, wondering what I was supposed to be doing there and when I could break free and go home.

In the resulting melee, my sister appeared on the scene with her class teacher and tried to pacify me, asking me to go back to my class and join the others like me – to learn and recite nursery rhymes, bring out my creative skills with the pencil in the drawing book, play games, have snacks and sleep before Father came to pick me up. Nothing of what she said went into my head. Some staff members brought toys to cheer me up. Even that did not work. Someone said my father had been contacted over the phone and that he would be there any moment.

During the hour-long period I was there, I felt as though I was being held hostage, and with my father's appearance on the scene, everything came to an end.

The principal categorically told my father that he had never seen such an adamant, stubborn child in his more than two decades of service in the educational institution. Pointing to the children in my class, he said some were docile, some naughty but obedient and that they all mixed freely with their newfound friends. They listened to and obeyed their teacher. I was an exception and, in all probability, could spoil the others in the class --this was his considered view. Summing up his sermon, he suggested that my father might try for my admission to some other school more amenable to my nature and behaviour.

With that, my stint at my first *alma mater* came to an end.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ban 'Chinese *manja*' before more lives are cut short

Apropos 'Bidar biker killed by *manja* while going to bring daughter home' (Jan 15), the death of a family breadwinner in Bidar, whose throat was slit by a *manja* thread while he was traveling on his scooter to pick up his daughter, highlights the extreme danger posed by these threads. Commonly referred to as 'Chinese *manja*', they are designed to cut through other kite threads in competitions and can slice through a human neck with ease. It is imperative that the state considers imposing a complete ban on *manja*, given its extreme hazard to humans and birds alike, who are at risk of getting entangled in these threads. Heavy fines should be imposed on those violating the guidelines, and initiatives should be taken without delay to prevent further fatalities

C V Aravind, Bengaluru

Park is no privilege

Restricting neighbourhood parks to narrow time windows defeats their purpose. Parks are shared spaces for workers, women, students, and the elderly, not exclusive clubs for morning walkers. Locking gates penalises those with limited mobility and rigid schedules. Public green spaces must remain accessible and inclusive.

Sihi Santhosh, Bengaluru

Review traffic rules

I refer to 'Rash,negligent driving cases surge 83% in Bengaluru' (Jan 15). Despite traffic police's efforts, Bengaluru sees a surge in rash/negligent driving cases. It is perhaps time to review and tighten rules, create awareness, and teach traffic rules in colleges, seeking pledges from youth to abide by them.

A K Shariff, Mysuru

Systemic failure

Apropos 'Abuse by authority: A familiar plot' (Jan 14), those in power often escape accountability because power protects itself. Many choose silence over justice, fearing backlash. This is not weakness; it is a systemic flaw punishing survivors more than offenders. Justice often arrives too late, with survivors carrying the burden while accused individuals face little impact. No one should have to choose between self-respect and survival.

Trisha Bafna, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

We ensured that Chhath Puja would be performed in clean water of Yamuna within 6 months. So many bombs are being dropped in Gaza today, what is the AQI there? Some people are only bothered by Diwali firecrackers.

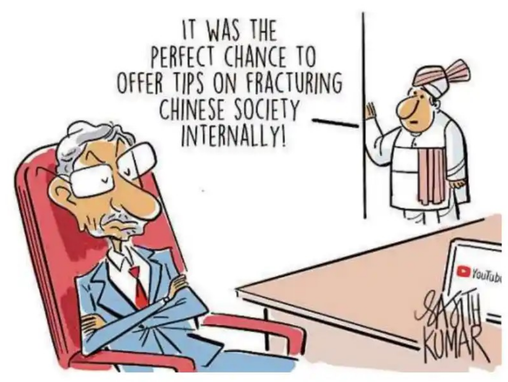
Kapil Mishra, Delhi Minister

The best time for you to hold your tongue is the time you feel you must say something.

Josh Billings

TO BE PRECISE

Chinese communist party delegation meets BJP, RSS leaders



IN PERSPECTIVE

G-2 games and the Pak pivot

As Pakistan reemerges as an intermediary and stakeholder in US-China ties, India must keep a close watch

MUKESH KUMAR

India and Pakistan have been significant players in the United States' China policy. While India is seen as a major force in deterring China, Pakistan's role has been to bridge the US' gap with China. Pakistan's stakes in the recent rapprochement between the US and China cannot be ignored. There are important takeaways from the October 30 meeting between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, which the former referred to as a G-2 summit, and the US' post-Pahalgam heel turn and Donald Trump's invitation to Asim Munir.

Historically, the road to collusion between the US and China has gone through Pakistan. The romance between the US and Pakistani military generals is not new; it has its roots in the Cold War days. In July 1961, US President John F. Kennedy invited Pakistan's President Mohammad Ayub Khan, a former military general, to the State dinner at Mount Vernon. The visit was diplomatic and geostrategic, a part of the US' containment of the communist states, viz. Soviet Union and China. The US invitation to Pakistan arrived when India was geared to a non-aligned approach, a setback in Washington's communist containment policy. However, Pakistan grabbed the opportunity to prove its loyalty and became a reliable frontline ally of the US.

In July 1971, US President Richard Nixon sent Henry Kissinger, his national security advisor and secretary of state, on a secret trip to China via Pakistan. The Pakistani diplomatic and military agency, primarily led by Khawaja Muhammad Kaiser, arranged the covert visit to China as a mediator between the US and China. Muhammad Kaiser, Pakistan's ambassador to China between 1969 and 1972, was pivotal in convincing the Chinese counterparts to meet Kissinger. This subsequently facilitated Nixon's visit to China in 1972. It was a direct rapprochement between a democracy and a communist state, facilitated by a military authoritarian regime. Nixon's visit aimed to utilise the rift between China and the Soviet Union, the US' superpower competitor during the Cold War years. Later, Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf visited the US as part of their alliance strategy.

However, after years of healthy relations between the US and India, mainly since the 2000s, Trump has struck a contrasting note. Following the Pahalgam incident, the US' turnaround towards Pakistan could be part of a strategy with echoes from history.

Pakistan has already proved its loyalty towards both the US and China. Besides the Bridging-China strategy, Pakistan has been viewed by the US as a tool in fighting terrorism, receiving millions of dollars of funding for years. On the other hand, during Operation Sindoor, China provided Pakistan's armed forces with satellite and intelligence inputs, in addition to arms and weapons systems. China's all-weather support for Pakistan is undeniable. The current US administration's affinity towards Pakistan could be a repeat of 1971, i.e. unifying Pakistan, at the cost of India, to negotiate with Beijing directly.

A volatile neighbourhood

Pakistan's role as a catalyst for G-2 could put it in a more favourable position. In the economic domain, China is a major stakeholder in several development initiatives in Pakistan, including the Gwadar port and CPEC projects. Recently, Trump also mentioned the prospects of mineral trade in Pakistan. Moreover, strong relations with the two economic giants could not only attract further investment and economic aid but also facilitate the flow of development loans and grants from the International Monetary Fund and other global institutions.

On the strategic front, Pakistan could streamline assistance in arms and technology from both the US and China. It is noteworthy that Pakistan's current arsenal includes arms and equipment from the US, China, and Russia. Pakistan's relationship with the G-2 could bring technological prowess and add capability to joint production. Recently, Pakistan, which is already using Chinese JF-17 fighter jets, was awarded a $686-million package by the US for the upgrade of its F-16 fighter jets.

Over the decades, India has been able to predict Chinese positions and strategic considerations. The US, however, has maintained a trial-and-error policy with India and Pakistan. Unless it abandons this approach, it may compromise its reliability in India, much like it did during the Cold War. Given that the G-2 countries are crucial for India's peace and security and economic prosperity, India should be cautious of Pakistan's moves in its backyard. While balancing its relationship with both the US and China, India must continue to focus on deterring Pakistan's influence in the region.

(The writer is a research associate at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi)

Grounded flights, grounded rights: IndiGo and a dual regulatory scrutiny

SUDHANSHU KUMAR AND GARIMA GUPTA

In December 2025, IndiGo Airlines cancelled nearly 5,000 flights, affecting around eight lakh passengers. The airline attributed the disruption to aircraft-on-ground issues, weather-related congestion, and operational constraints, particularly a shortage of pilots arising from difficulties in implementing new flight duty time limitations (FTDL). While operational requirements demanded 2,422 captains, only 2,357 were available. Passengers faced last-minute cancellations, higher rebooking costs and disrupted travel plans. In response to the systemic disruption, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) placed its FDTL orders in abeyance.

Facilities to be provided to air passengers in cases of denied boarding, flight cancellations and delays are governed by the DGCA Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR). Airlines are required to promptly inform passengers of disruptions and offer alternatives such as rebooking or refunds, failing which statutory compensation, airport facilities and care obligations arise. For prolonged delays, airlines must provide re-accommodation or refunds, with the burden on the airline to prove timely passenger communication.

The Government of India ordered a high-level inquiry to identify failures and fix accountability. The DGCA terminated four Flight Operations Inspectors of IndiGo, while the Competition Commission of India (CCI) initiated a suo motu inquiry. The ministries of civil aviation and consumer affairs have also begun discussions on structural reforms.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, confers on the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) a broad, market-wide mandate to protect consumer interests and address unfair or misleading practices affecting consumers as a class. On the basis of public information, CCPA intervention may be warranted where tickets were sold for flights later cancelled at short notice, cancellations were not transparently communicated, refund timelines were uncertain and consumer harm was widespread. Potential grounds for action include misleading representations regarding service availability, exacerbation of information asymmetry through delayed communication, unfair trade practices involving last-minute cancellations and limited rebooking options, and deficiencies in post-cancellation customer service.

Comparative regulatory experience underscores the seriousness with which such conduct is treated in concentrated aviation markets. In 2024, Australia's Federal Court imposed a penalty of AU$100 million on Qantas for misleading consumers by selling tickets for flights already decided to be cancelled and failing to promptly inform passengers, following proceedings initiated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Qantas admitted that senior management was aware of these practices and accepted that delayed system updates generated revenue, impeded customer switching and deferred the costs of timely corrective measures.

IndiGo could arguably have anticipated similar lapses, given that the new FTDL norms were notified 18 months in advance. Despite adding nearly 200 daily flights in 2025, it hired only 418 pilots against an estimated requirement of 1,000 to comply with revised roster limits. Notwithstanding the impending deadline, IndiGo continued accepting bookings at full capacity. Media reports suggest opaque delay-management practices, whereby delays were extended incrementally, prompting passengers to cancel bookings themselves and incur cancellation charges. If established, such conduct may justify CCPA action without affecting individual remedies.

The Competition Act, 2002, empowers CCI to enquire into the conduct that causes appreciable adverse effects on competition, including abuse of dominant position. In civil aviation, market definition has often followed the origin-and-destination (O&D) pair approach, treating each route as a distinct relevant market based on demand substitutability (Jet-Etihad merger, 2013). However, where consumer harm flows from system-wide operational decisions rather than route-specific conduct, competition authorities have also accepted a broader market definition encompassing domestic scheduled passenger air transport services (South African Airways Ltd, 2005). In this case, large-scale cancellations affecting passengers across regions, coupled with a uniform national regulatory framework, support such a market definition.

IndiGo accounted for approximately 63% of domestic passengers in FY 2025, with Air India at 13.6% and other airlines holding significantly smaller shares in terms of passengers and seat capacity (Statista 2025). Among carriers, IndiGo continues to dominate with the highest market share, supported by a strong fleet and extensive domestic and international routes. (IBEF) IndiGo carried the highest number of passengers in FY 2024 (10,64,02,783), with Air India a distant second (2,35,15,707). Commercial aviation comprised 85.8% of India's aviation market in FY 2024, with IndiGo holding around 57%. This dominance reflects sustained growth, including a 24.79% year-on-year increase. Public sources consistently characterise the sector as highly concentrated, with IndiGo itself describing its position as "India's largest and most preferred passenger airline". Given IndiGo's nationwide network, high route frequencies, and strong presence across tier-2 and tier-3 cities, passengers often face limited comparable alternatives. The reported disruptions indicate systemic consumer harm rather than mere diversion of demand to competitors.

Given IndiGo's position as the largest domestic airline, such conduct, if established, may be relevant to an examination of abuse of dominant position, as it could have affected consumer choice, switching possibilities, and market outcomes on a nationwide scale.

(The writers are faculty members at NLSIU, Bengaluru)

Harvard still dominates, though it fell to No 3 on a list measuring academic output. Other American universities are falling farther behind their global peers

MARK ARSENAULT

Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China, is now at the top of a global ranking of research output, supplanting Harvard. NYT

Chinese universities surge in global rankings. US schools slip

Until recently, Harvard was the most productive research university in the world, according to a global ranking that looks at academic publication.

That position may be teetering, the most recent evidence of a troubling trend for American academia.

Harvard recently dropped to No. 3 on the ranking. The schools racing up the list are not Harvard's American peers, but Chinese universities that have been steadily climbing in rankings that emphasise the volume and quality of research they produce.

The reordering comes as the Trump administration has been slashing research funding to American schools that depend heavily on the federal government to pay for scientific endeavours. President Trump's policies did not start the American universities' relative decline, which began years ago, but they could accelerate it.

"There is a big shift coming, a bit of a new world order in global dominance of higher education and research," said Phil Baty, chief global affairs officer for Times Higher Education, a British organisation unconnected to *The New York Times* that produces one of the better-known world rankings of universities.

Educators and experts say the shift is a problem not just for American universities, but also for the nation as a whole.

"There is a risk of the trend continuing, and potential decline," Mr. Baty said. "I use the word 'decline' very carefully. It's not as if U.S. schools are getting demonstrably worse, it's just the global competition: Other nations are making more rapid progress."

Look back to the early 2000s, and a global university ranking based on scientific output, such as published journal articles, would be very different. Seven American schools would be among the top 10, led by Harvard University at No. 1.

Only one Chinese school, Zhejiang University, would even make the top 25.

Today, Zhejiang is ranked first on that list, the Leiden Rankings, from the Centre for Science and Technology Studies at Leiden University in the Netherland. Seven other Chinese schools are in the top 10.

Harvard produces significantly more research now than it did two decades ago, but it has nonetheless fallen to third. And it is the only American university still near the top of the list. Harvard is still first in the Leiden rankings for highly-cited scientific publications.

The issue at top American universities is not falling production. Six prominent American schools that would have been in the top 10 in the first decade of the 2000s — the University of Michigan, the University of California, Los Angeles, Johns Hopkins, the University of Washington-Seattle, the University of Pennsylvania, and Stanford University — are producing more research than they did two decades ago, according to the Leiden tallies.

But production by the Chinese schools has risen far more. According to Mark Neijssel, director of services for the Centre for Science and Technology Studies, the Leiden rankings take into account papers and citations contained in the Web of Science, a database set of academic publications which is owned by Clarivate, a data and analytics company. Thousands of academic journals are represented in the databases, many of which are highly specialised, he said.

Global university rankings generally have not attracted much popular attention in the United States. Even so, some experienced academics are seeing the growth in research production from China that the rankings reflect, and are warning that America is falling behind.

Rafael Reif, a former president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said on a podcast last year that "the number of papers and the quality of the papers coming from China are outstanding" and are "dwarfing what we're doing in the US."

Institutions in other countries around the world, by contrast, are watching the global rankings, seeing them as a measure both of academic prowess and of their progress in overtaking the US. Zhejiang University displays its rankings prominently on its web page, and lists among the milestones in its history when it broke into the top 100 globally in 2017. Chinese state media has celebrated the ranking rise of the country's universities.

The centre at Leiden has begun producing an alternative ranking that is based on a different academic database, called OpenAlex. Harvard is No 1 in that ranking, but the trend is the same: 12 of the next 13 schools on the list are Chinese.

"China is really building a lot of research capacity," Neijssel said. At the same time, he said, Chinese researchers are putting more emphasis on publishing in English-language journals that are more widely read — and cited — around the world.

President Xi Jinping, in a speech in 2024, praised his country's advances in fields such as quantum technology and space science. He cited a breakthrough by researchers at Tianjin Institute of Industrial Biotechnology, who developed a method to synthesise starch from carbon dioxide in the lab, which could possibly lead to industries making food from the air, without needing acres of plants dependent on land, irrigation and harvesting.

Other ranking systems that are weighted toward scientific output reflect a similar shift toward Chinese institutions.

Harvard is No. 1 globally in the University Ranking by Academic Performance, compiled by the Informatics Institute of Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. But Stanford University was the only other U.S. school in the top 10, which includes four Chinese universities. Another ranking, the Nature Index, placed Harvard first, followed by 10 Chinese schools.

Harvard and other leading U.S. universities face a fresh set of stressors from the Trump administration's cuts to science grants, as well as from travel bans and an anti-immigration crackdown that has swept up international students and academics.

The number of international students arriving in the US in August 2025 was 19 percent lower than the year before, a trend that could further hurt the prestige and rankings of American schools if the world's best minds choose to study and work elsewhere.

China has been pouring billions of dollars into its universities and aggressively working to make them attractive to foreign researchers. In the fall, China began offering a visa specifically for graduates of top universities in science and technology to travel to China to study or do business.

"China has a boatload of money in higher education that it didn't have 20 years ago," said Alex Usher, president of Higher Education Strategy Associates, a Toronto education consulting company.

Xi has made the reasons for the country's investments explicit, arguing that a nation's global power depends on its scientific dominance.

"The scientific and technological revolution is intertwined with the game between superpowers," he said in a speech in 2024.

President Trump's administration has taken the opposite tack, aiming to cut billions of dollars in research grants for US universities.

Trump officials have argued that the cuts are meant to eliminate waste and reorient research away from themes of diversity and other topics that they see as too political.

The Trump administration did not respond to a request for comment for this article. For 2026, and for the 10th year in a row, Times Higher Education in Britain ranked Oxford University the No. 1 university in the world. The rest of the organisation's top five included the same schools as last year: MIT, Princeton, the University of Cambridge, and then Harvard, tied with Stanford.

American schools held seven of the top 10 spots in the 2026 ranking. But farther down the list, American universities are slipping. Sixty-two US schools were ranked lower than last year, while only 19 rose.

Ten years ago, two prominent Beijing schools — Peking University and Tsinghua University — were ranked 42nd and 47th in Times Higher Education's list. Now they are just below the top 10: Tsinghua was ranked 12th, and Peking 13th. Six schools in Hong Kong are now in the top 200; South Korea placed four in the top 100.

While some foreign schools have risen, some well-known American schools have slipped. Duke University, for instance, was ranked 20th in 2021, and now is ranked 28th.

The New York Times

The Nobel obsession

MELANIE P KUMAR

The blatant flouting of all international norms by America, in entering Venezuela by stealth and taking prisoner its President Maduro and his wife as prisoners to the US, the first worldwide reaction would have been, "There goes Donald Trump's Peace Prize."

But if something is a magnificent obsession, as is the Nobel Peace Prize for Trump, nothing can stop him from trying for it. Not one to stay and wait for the Nobel, this POTUS ensured he managed the first Peace Prize instituted by FIFA, which he collected in person. When awarding the prize, FIFA's President Gianni Infantino (Trump's friend) said that it had been instituted to honour individuals who had striven hard and made exceptional contributions towards peace.

Many saw this laurel as some kind of a consolation prize for Trump, who had actively campaigned for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize – among the exorbitant claims were diplomatic efforts in brokering a historic peace treaty between Congo DR and Rwanda, peace initiatives between Israel and Palestine and also efforts to end the attacks on Ukraine by Russia. Also, both on and off social media, Trump repeated ad nauseum his role in ending the India-Pakistan war. Pakistan was quick to follow in formally recommending Trump for the prize by citing his "decisive diplomatic intervention", whilst India was hardly forthcoming in giving the US President credit.

Despite the FIFA award backlash resulting from the abduction of the President of Venezuela, the football governing body says that they are not reconsidering the Peace Award. They are probably justified in their decision if one were to consider the number of questionable Nobel Peace Prizes.

Probably the most controversial was the 1973 one, given to then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who was named along with North Vietnamese leader Le Duc Tho for a temporary Vietnamese ceasefire through the Paris Peace Accords, which quickly unravelled. *The New York Times* scathingly termed it the "Nobel War Prize", while Harvard professors petitioned the Norwegian Parliament, saying the choice was "more than a person with a normal sense of justice can take."

Interestingly, the Vietnamese Le Duc refused the award, making him the truly noble laureate in history and the only one to decline the Nobel Peace Prize. Kissinger accepted, though he did not attend the Oslo ceremony, offering the implausible explanation of a schedule clash. Two years later when the Vietnam War officially ended, Kissinger attempted to return the award, saying, "The peace we sought through negotiations has been overturned by force." But the Nobel Committee declined to take back the award, despite two of its members resigning in protest over the selection of Kissinger, breaking the claim of unanimity that the committee chairman had tried to project. Protests continued over Kissinger as an awardee on account of his expanding the Vietnam War into Cambodia and Laos. His support for authoritarian regimes around the world included his role in the 1973 coup in Chile that overthrew the democratically elected presidency of Salvador Allende, not to mention his tacit approval of Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975.

President Barack Obama winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009, with no efforts at conflict resolution, also stirred up a huge controversy, as his opponents claimed that the prize had lost its credibility to "whatever prizes they are putting in Cracker Jacks these days."

Aung San Suu Kyi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her peaceful resistance against the military junta, turned out to be another disappointment. After her party's landslide victory in 2015, Suu Kyi completely changed her approach. Those who saw her as an international symbol of courage watched the betrayal as she personally defended Myanmar and its allegations of genocide against the Rohingya Muslims at the International Criminal Court of Justice. Ironically, Suu Kyi is now under the detention of the same generals whom she first fought against and then defended, in a complete travesty of what the Nobel Peace Prize is meant to stand for.

The actions of her 2025 successor, Maria Corina Machado, are no less questionable, as she dedicated her Peace Prize to Donald Trump, who confirmed CIA covert operations in her country and now took its president as prisoner. After this assault on Venezuela, Machado is believed to have moved from wanting to share her peace prize with Trump to now wanting to hand it to him. The Nobel Peace Committee was quick to issue a "no transfer of prize" statement.

The Nobel Peace Prize in present times seems to have moved in its notion of what a peace prize entails, probably in keeping with geopolitical realities. Hence, it might be possible to see Donald Trump as a future awardee. Even if that were not to be, Trump could probably console himself by saying that he is in good company. The greatest apostle of peace and non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, was denied the Nobel Peace Prize, despite being nominated five times.

(The author is an independent writer and a keen observer of politics)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 1976

Algerian president writes to PM on Angola

New Delhi, January 15
President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria has written to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and other heads of non-aligned governments, urging recognition of the MPLA-led Government in Angola. The Government in Luanda, capital of Angola, is headed by Dr. Augustino Neto, leader of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola and has been recognised by 22 African countries and all Socialist countries except China. Belgrade has also sent a message to the Indian Government.

25 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 2001

Villagers up in arms against pesticide

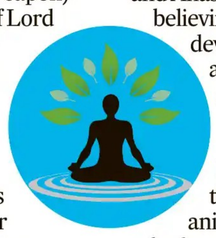
Mangalore, Jan 15
The movement against spraying the pesticide Endosulphan by the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) in Kasaragod district is gathering momentum. While the panchayat has passed a resolution against such spraying, many social activists from outside Padre village have come out with scientific studies against the dreaded pesticide. Enmakaje Panchayat has passed a unanimous resolution opposing any form of Endosulphan pesticide spraying within the panchayat limits.

OASIS | SUDHA UMASHANKER

Dattatreya: The embodiment of *Trimurti*

Dattatreya, an incarnation of the Trimurti--Brahma , Vishnu and Shiva, is celebrated as the Adiguru and a great preceptor. A proponent of advaita or non-duality, he showed his devotees the path to self-realisation through his teachings, his guidance and the example he set. Born to Sage Atri and his devoted wife Anasuya, the name Dattatreya translates to Datta - given or granted and Atreya – connoting his parents Atri and Anasuya.

Being the embodiment of the aspects of the Holy Trinity, pictorial images of Dattatreya show him with three heads representing Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, a cow that stands for nourishment, a *kamandalu* (pot of water), a rosary, (associated with Brahma), the *damru* and *trishul* (Shiva's weapon) and the conch and *chakra* of Lord Vishnu. These symbols represent many things: what is needed and the time given to create the universe, cosmic sound, sustenance, dissolution and slaying of inimical forces. Dattatreya is also seen surrounded by four dogs, which represent the four Vedas or the four yugas.



There are several stories about Dattatreya's birth but the one common thread is that he was born to deeply spiritual parents -Atri who prayed fervently for a son like the Lord of Lords and Anasuya who lived life firmly believing that being a completely devoted wife was the way to accumulate merit and beget a great son. Who were the Adiguru's gurus ?

Dattatreya acknowledged his 24 gurus comprising the elements, besides birds, animals, insects and humans and had explained that he learnt lessons from each -- the power of enduring anything from the earth which has withstood damage and destruction; to stand firm from the mountains; and to remain unattached from the wind which blows through many places without staying in one spot and so on. The *Avadhuta Gita*, which he taught to the volatile Parashurama throws more light on Dattatreya.

He was also deeply into yoga. Having learnt Ashtanga yoga from Dattatreya, Patanjali went on to codify the teachings in his *Yoga Sutra*. Dattatreya took numerous other incarnations and these include Shripad Shri Vallabh, Narasimha Saraswathi, Swami Samarth, and Shirdi Sai Baba besides Manik Prabhu and Gajanan Maharaj. *Hari Om Tat sat Jai Gurudev Datta* is the *mantra* in praise of Dattatreya.

Apex court asks EC to publish names of deleted voters in Kerala's SIR

Suggests poll panel to extend deadline, preferably by two weeks, for filing objections

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Election Commission to make public the names of people excluded from the draft electoral rolls published after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Kerala, allowing aggrieved voters to raise objections.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi also suggested that the poll panel consider extending the deadline, preferably by two weeks, for filing objections against the deletion of names.

The court was hearing a batch of petitions challenging the SIR in Kerala.

The petitioners included the Kerala government, senior political leaders such as P K Kunhalikutty of IUML, M V Govindan Master of CPM, and Sunny Joseph, alongside the CPI State Council.

The pleas contended that the SIR process, as currently executed, risked disenfranchising a massive segment of the population due to technical errors and a lack of a robust redressal mechanism.

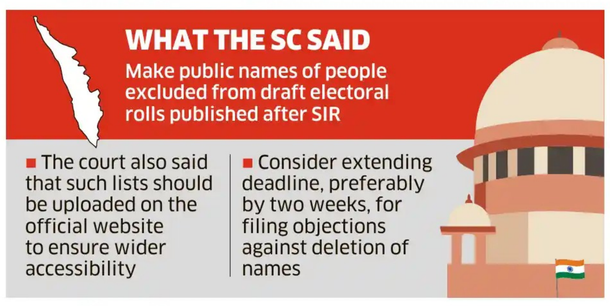
The counsel for the petitioners submitted that according to draft electoral rolls released after the revision, nearly 24 lakh names had been deleted.

It was argued that while voters are required to file objections against deletion, the list of excluded persons has not been made accessible, effectively denying them a meaningful opportunity to contest the removal of their names.

"They have to list objections, but the list of those persons deleted is not available. Now people have to go back and file objections stating why you deleted me...that opportunity is missing for us," one of the lawyers said.

The petitioners further pointed out that in the draft rolls, some voters have been erroneously shown as deceased.

The lack of transparency has caused serious difficulties for voters, particularly in rural areas, they said.


WHAT THE SC SAID
Make public names of people excluded from draft electoral rolls published after SIR
The court also said that such lists should be uploaded on the official website to ensure wider accessibility
Consider extending deadline, preferably by two weeks, for filing objections against deletion of names

EC says it cannot deport or decide visa status

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Election Commission on Thursday told the Supreme Court that it could determine citizenship only to the extent of registration as a voter and could not deport anyone or decide if a person has a visa to stay in India.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi made vehement submissions on behalf of the poll panel before a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi.

The bench resumed final hearings on a batch of petitions that challenged the EC's SIR exercise in several states, including Bihar, raising constitutional questions on the scope of the poll panel's powers, citizenship, and the right to vote.

Adult suffrage

At the outset of the proceedings, Dwivedi referred to Article 326 of the Constitution to support the decision of the EC to undertake SIR of electoral rolls and said it provides for elections based on adult suffrage.

The lawyer relied on Section 16 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, to contend that Parliament has made it explicit that only citizens are entitled to be registered as electors.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), said while there was no dispute that citizenship is a prerequisite for voting, the core question was whether the poll panel has the authority to determine citizenship at all.

The CJI said the commission's stand was that it was only identifying citizens, not adjudicating citizenship in a broader sense.

Dwivedi said the EC's role is limited and "it can determine citizenship only to the extent of registration as a voter... We cannot deport anyone or decide whether a person has a visa to stay in India. Those issues are not our concern."

The bench said that while the poll panel cannot act as the authority to grant citizenship, it can hold an inquiry to verify whether a person claiming to be a citizen is genuine for electoral purposes.

Poll body extends deadline for filing objections to draft rolls

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Election Commission on Thursday night extended the date for filing of claims and objections to the draft electoral rolls published after Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in five states and Union territories, including West Bengal, by four days.

The filing of claims and objections in Goa, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan, Puducherry and West Bengal were to end on Thursday but it has now extended till January 19.

The EC has written to the Chief Electoral Officers of the four states and one Union Territory where the draft rolls were published on December 16 last year. Initially, time was given till January 15 for filing claims and objections to include or exclude names in rolls.

In the letter, Under Secretary Sandeep Kumar said the CEOs are directed to ensure wide publicity about the extension of filing claims and objections during the period.

Modi govt's 'Hum Do Humaare Do' policy hurts pvt investment: Cong

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Claiming that corporates in India are more focused on managing wealth in financial markets instead of making investments in capacity expansion, Congress on Thursday warned that the Modi government's "Hum Do Humaare Do-isation" of the economy will only disincentivise growth in private investment.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the headline numbers for inflation-adjusted GDP growth rates are "deceptive", as the price deflators are themselves very low and hence these rates get magnified.

"Low price deflators may cause cheer to the Modi government but they are the result of low consumer demand on account of income levels which have stagnated outside the very top of the pyramid. Corporate India is flush with cash. Profits are at record highs and debt at record lows," he posted on 'X'.

He said the question that the Budget has to address boldly is why are companies more focused on managing wealth in financial markets instead of making investments in capacity expansion.

52 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh

BIJAPUR (CHHATTISGARH), PTI: As many as 52 Naxalites, 49 of them carrying a collective bounty of over Rs 1.41 crore, surrendered before the police in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Thursday, a senior official said.

The surrendered cadres, including 21 women, were active in Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC), Andhra-Odisha Border division and Bhamragarh area committee (Maharashtra) of Maoists, they said. They turned themselves in before senior police and CRPF officials here under the "Poona" Margem (from rehabilitation to social reintegration) initiative, Bijapur SP said.

India, EU eye defence & security partnership

PM Modi to host bloc leaders on January 25

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India and the European Union (EU) are likely to launch a security and defence partnership, besides clinching a trade deal, later this month when Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosts the 27-nation bloc's leaders as chief guests at the Republic Day ceremony in New Delhi.

The two sides are also expected to make progress on the proposed India-EU Security of Information Agreement. They will also discuss India's participation in the EU's security and defence initiatives, like the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

European Council President António Luís Santos da Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will arrive in New Delhi on January 25.

"The participation of EU leaders as chief guests at the 77th Republic Day and the 16th India-EU Summit will further deepen the India-EU Strategic Partnership and advance collaboration in priority areas of mutual interest," the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

"Trade, security and defence, clean transition and people-to-people cooperation will top the agenda of the discussions," the European Council said in Brussels.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal told journalists in New Delhi on Thursday that India and the EU concluded negotiations over 20 out of the 24 chapters of the proposed agreement.

New Delhi's demand for exemption from the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) for India's steel and aluminium exports to Europe, however, remained unresolved.

The CBAM ensures that a carbon price is applied to emissions embedded in certain goods imported into the EU nations. It came into effect on January 1. India is asking for carve-outs in the FTA to shield exporters from the tax, but the EU has not budged.

Other negotiations

The 16th India-EU summit is also likely to see progress on the proposed Security of Information Agreement (SOIA), which will remove the hurdles in the exchange of classified and sensitive information.

The SOIA will lead to stronger ties in areas related to security and defence, a source told *DH* on Thursday.

BOLSTERING TIES

- India-EU talks to focus on trade, security and defence, clean transition & people-to-people ties.
- India's push for exemption from the EU's carbon border tax on steel and aluminium remains unresolved.
- Discussions will also cover India's role in EU defence initiatives, including PESCO.

Maha civic polls stained by ink row

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Maharashtra's high-profile local body polls ran into a major controversy on Thursday, with Opposition parties alleging the "murder of democracy" over the deviation from the traditional method of putting inks on fingers through the use of marker pens and the poor quality of indelible ink that could apparently be wiped off using sanitisers, nail-removers, and other chemicals, like acetone.

This has led to a major slugfest, with the constituents of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)-I.N.D.I.A bloc in the Opposition — the Congress, the Uddhav Thackeray-headed Shiv Sena (UBT), and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) — and other parties, like Raj Thackeray's MNS and the AAP, slamming the BJP and the State Election Commission (SEC).

However, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis brushed aside the allegations. "I have also been inked with a marker. Is it getting erased?" he asked reporters.

The ink had been procured from Kores India Ltd, which has been providing indelible ink for several decades and has been used in Maharashtra since 2011, said SEC sources.

People wait in queues outside a polling booth before casting their votes in the civic polls in Mumbai on Thursday. PTI

AICC secretary and Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant was among the first to flag the issue with a video on social media, after which several videos emerged.

The Thackeray cousins — Uddhav and Raj — led the charge in slamming the BJP and the SEC.

"Sanitiser or nail-polish remover can be used to remove the ink. Has the SEC opened an agency for sanitiser and nail polish? This is the murder of democracy," said Uddhav.

"The BJP and its allies have ensured that duplicate names exist in the voter lists," he said, adding: "That is why Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants One Nation, One Election."

Raj alleged: "The government has decided to win these elections at all costs. It is repeating what it did during the Assembly elections, but we will not let it happen."

Meanwhile, NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule raised concerns over serious malfunctions in EVMs.

SEC clarification

As the row escalated, State Election Commissioner Dinesh Waghmare warned that if people were found spreading fake narratives, action would be taken against them. "Attempts to remove the indelible ink applied on voters' fingers at polling stations and thereby create confusion in the voting process are illegal. If any person is found trying to vote again after removing the ink mark, appropriate legal action will be taken against them," he said.

Exit polls predict BJP sweep in BMC

All exit polls predict a clear sweep for the BJP–Shiv Sena alliance in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections held on Thursday, pointing to a defeat for the Shiv Sena (UBT)–MNS combine.

If the projections hold, the Thackerays could lose control of the BMC, which the undivided Shiv Sena dominated for over 25 years. Most surveys project the BJP alliance winning between 130 and 150 seats. The Thackeray bloc, along with Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP), is expected to secure 50–60 seats, while the Congress and its allies — the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and the Rashtriya Samaj Paksha — may get 15–20.

Some seers oppose Rahul Gandhi's entry into Ram Temple

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Amid reports of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's possible visit to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, a group of seers has demanded that he should not be allowed to enter the shrine, citing the party's description of the 2024 'consecration ceremony' of Ram Lalla as a 'political drama'.

Prominent seer and Shankaracharya of Jyotir Mutt, Swami Avimukteshwaranand, said Rahul Gandhi was not a 'Hindu' and, therefore, should not be allowed to enter the Ram Temple.

A few seers from Ayodhya also expressed support for the demand made by Avimukteshwaranand.

Disturbed by chaos in HC during I-PAC raid hearing: Top court

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday slammed the enormous disturbance and commotion caused in the Calcutta High Court on January 9, forcing it to adjourn hearing on the ED's plea against interference into its probe in a money laundering case, after being told that messages were sent on WhatsApp and vehicles were arranged to bring people to the courtroom.

"We are disturbed by the manner in which the hearing in the high court was adjourned due to commotion," a bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Vipul M Pancholi said.

'Is it Jantar Mantar'

Taking up the ED's writ petition for CBI probe into the acts of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during its search operations in I-PAC, the bench expressed surprise as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said it was not spontaneous as the legal wing of TMC circulated WhatsApp messages asking people to gather in the courtroom. "Come, everyone? As if it's Jantar Mantar," the bench said.

Mehta pointed out, on account of an unmanageable crowd, the HC was forced to adjourn the scheduled hearing of cases related to the ED raid at I-PAC office.

"We approached the high court. This is what happens when mobocracy replaces democracy. This is what the high court records," Solicitor General Mehta said.

He contended the proceeding was live-streamed and the hearing was less than satisfactory. ED faced many difficulties and the microphone was constantly muted.

Assuring that this would not be repeated, senior advocate Kapil Sibal said, hearing took place on January 14, without any ruckus, but the ED sought adjournment.

The top court issued notice to the West Bengal chief minister and DGP Rajeev Kumar and others on the ED's plea for a CBI probe into the episode alleging Banerjee took away digital devices and files during the search operations in connection with the money laundering case connected to the coal pilferage scam.

It also stayed the FIR lodged by the police against the ED sleuths.

SC reserves judgment on euthanasia plea for man in coma

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its judgment on a plea filed by a man for passive euthanasia for his 31-year-old son by withdrawing his artificial life support, since he has been in a comatose condition for more than 12 years.

The individual, Harish Rana, sustained head injuries after falling from the fourth floor of a building in 2013.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and K V Viswanathan wrapped up the proceedings upon hearing submissions from Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Union government, and advocate Rashmi Nandakumar, representing the father, Ashok Rana.

Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life support or the treatment necessary to keep them alive.

During the hearing, the bench highlighted the importance of the family taking a "consistent and well-considered" decision.

The counsel for the petitioner submitted that hospitals should nominate doctors who were a part of medical boards to undertake medical examinations in cases where family members had come forward with a wish to withdraw life support.

Nandakumar also requested that the court not use the term "passive euthanasia" and instead use "withdrawing/withholding life-sustaining treatment" in its judgment.

On January 13, the judges personally met Rana's parents and his younger brother, who said they did not want him to suffer anymore.

Rahul not invited to CSPOC event, BJP criticism misplaced

NEW DELHI, DHNS: While several BJP leaders criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for not attending the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) inaugural event, it has emerged that Gandhi was not invited in the first place.

Rahul Gandhi

Sources said that the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha has received an invitation only for the lunch hosted by the Vice President on Friday, which he is likely to skip.

On the sidelines of the event, several BJP leaders criticised Gandhi for his absence. However, sources in both the government and the Congress confirmed that Gandhi was not extended an invitation.

There was speculation that only members of the Foreign Affairs Committee were present. However, it remains unclear if that was indeed the case. Attendees from the Congress included Shashi Tharoor, who is considered a foreign affairs expert and has not been strictly toeing the party line lately.

Sources said that Gandhi has been invited only for the lunch that Vice President CP Radhakrishnan is hosting for the delegates on Friday. However, Gandhi is not going to attend the event, sources confirmed. Some senior Congress members have reportedly taken up the matter with Om Birla.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State SP Singh Baghel said that he should have been present since it was an event that involved pride of nation.

India's diversity is strength of its democracy: PM Modi

AMRITA MADHUKALYA & SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's diversity is the strength of its democracy and showed the world that democratic institutions and processes give stability, speed and scale to its development.

Inaugurating the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), Modi also said that India is constantly advocating for the Global South on all platforms and building open-source tech for partners in the region.

"India's continuous effort is to ensure that whatever innovations we make benefit the Global South and benefits for Commonwealth countries," PM Modi added.

Modi also lauded India's UPI system and said it is the world's largest digital payment platform. "We lead as the top producer of vaccines, and rank second worldwide in steel production," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and others during a group photograph at the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth Countries in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

Speaking about the historic significance of the Central Hall, renamed Samvidhan Sadan, the Prime Minister said that the hall served as the meeting place of the Constituent Assembly during India's independence and functioned as Parliament for 75 years.

Birla flags misuse of AI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh on Thursday cautioned against the misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) while highlighting the importance of institutional memory of humans in shaping application of technology in legislatures.

Birla said AI and social media have enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of democratic institutions.

However, he said, their misuse has also given rise to serious concerns such as misinformation, cybercrime and social polarisation while emphasising that it is a collective responsibility of legislatures to engage seriously with these challenges and evolve appropriate solutions.

At a session on 'AI in Parliament: Balancing Innovation, Oversight and Adaptation', Harivansh said institutional knowledge of humans is central to developing accountable AI for Parliaments.

Emphasising that innovation without restraint carries risk while restraint without innovation can lead to stagnation, he said Parliament must maintain a careful and deliberate balance between the two.

Drones spotted in J&K again

SRINAGAR, DHNS: Security forces in Jammu & Kashmir were put on high alert on Thursday evening after multiple drones were spotted along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Indo-Pakistan International Border (IB), prompting swift responses and intensified surveillance in sensitive sectors.

In the Poonch district's Digwar sector, a drone-like object was reportedly observed hovering over Indian territory for several minutes before the Army opened fire to neutralise it. Shortly afterwards, another suspected drone was seen over Samba district's Ramgarh sector, raising alarm along the IB.

Security forces were immediately mobilised, and surveillance measures were enhanced across forward border zones to prevent any potential threats. Forces remain vigilant as the situation is closely monitored.

The latest incidents add to the several other drone sightings in the past week, part of a broader pattern of aerial activity along the J&K borders. Drones were reported in the Samba, Rajouri, and Poonch districts.

The repeated sightings come amid growing concerns about the use of drones for surveillance, smuggling of arms and ammunition, and possible reconnaissance along the volatile frontier.

In a recent incident, security forces recovered an arms consignment allegedly dropped by a Pakistani drone in the Paloora village near the IB in Samba. It included pistols, magazines, rounds, and a grenade.

The Indian Army has publicly pressed Pakistan to curb drone intrusions, with its chief warning that they were "unacceptable" and could undermine ceasefire understandings along the border.

Student suicides must be reported immediately: SC to higher edu bodies

Orders National Task Force to suggest SOP for 'well-being audits' of students

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Task Force (NTF), which it had set up after noting a disturbing pattern of student suicides being reported from various educational institutions, to suggest measures for the creation of a model Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for periodic "well-being audits" in higher education institutions (HEIs).

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, while adopting the NTF's recommendations, directed all HEIs across the country to immediately report any suicide or unnatural death of a student to the police. It said such institutions could not shirk their fundamental duty to ensure that they as a whole were safe, equitable, inclusive, and conducive spaces of learning.

Dealing with a plea filed by Amit Kumar and others, the court also sought help from the NTF for the creation of a model SOP for faculty sensitisation and training, and mental health services for students, among others.

"What we wish to achieve and also hope from the NTF is that they suggest a model 'Universal Design Framework' or a model 'Suicide Prevention and Postvention Protocol' or a model 'Student well-being Protocol' that cohesively and comprehensively incorporates the model SOPs, the existing guidelines on ragging, promotion of equity, sexual harassment, etc, and any other relevant measures which they may consider necessary, into one single guiding document," said the bench.

In view of NTF's suggestions, the court issued orders stating that the Sample Registration System data on suicides — especially of those falling within age group of 15-29 years — must be centrally maintained for better and more accurate estimates of HEI students' deaths by suicide.

"Keeping in mind the faculty shortages, reported in several HEIs, both public and private, it must be ensured that all vacant faculty positions (both teaching and non-teaching) be filled within a period of four months, with priority given to posts reserved for candidates from marginalized and underrepresented communities including those posts reserved for persons with disabilities," the bench said in its 38-page order.

The court also ordered that the appointment and filling of vacancies of the post of vice-chancellor, registrars, and other key positions must also happen within four months.

AI flight damaged after cargo container gets sucked into engine

NEW DELHI, DHNS: An Air India aircraft, which was headed to New York but returned to Delhi following the closure of Iranian airspace, suffered damage on Thursday morning when its right engine ingested a cargo container at the airport amid dense fog, officials said.

While the Airbus A350 landed safely, officials said flight AI-101 (Delhi–New York, JFK) sustained substantial damage to its right engine after ingesting a cargo container during taxiing to the apron. The incident occurred at around 5:25 am.

Officials said visibility at the time of the incident was marginal and a preliminary investigation showed that a Bird Worldwide Flight Services (BWFS) tug transporting containers to the baggage make-up area of Terminal 3 crossed a taxiway intersection while moving along the vehicular lane.

"During the crossing, one of the containers toppled onto the taxiway intersection. This container was ingested into the No. 2 engine of the Air India A350 aircraft. After clearing the metal pieces, the aircraft was parked at stand 244. Further investigation is being carried out by the DGCA," officials said.

"The aircraft was safely positioned at the designated parking stand, ensuring the safety of all passengers and crew on board," an Air India statement said.

SC refuses to intervene in *Jana Nayagan* censor row

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to consider a plea by the producer of actor-turned-politician Vijay's swansong, *Jana Nayagan*, challenging the Madras High Court's interim stay on a single-judge order that had directed the grant of censor board clearance to the film.

However, the apex court asked the high court to decide the matter on January 20.

The film was earlier scheduled for release on January 9.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for KVN Productions LLP, the film's producer, submitted before a bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma that publicity had already been carried out and that audiences would not wait for three months.

The bench, however, asked the counsel to raise his submissions before the High Court's division bench.

Rohatgi urged the apex court to ask the High Court to decide the matter on January 20, arguing that a film was a perishable product and that any delay would cause "serious injury".

"Otherwise, I am sunk anyway. I have lost everything," he submitted, adding that it was a long-established industry practice to announce a release date before receiving clearance from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). He also said that over 5,000 theatres had already been booked.

"We would welcome all judges disposing of matters within a day or two of filing, but this should happen in all cases. This is a blistering pace — matter filed on the 6th and decided on the 7th — when the case is already fixed before the division bench on the 20th," the bench observed.

Since the division bench had already listed the matter for January 20, there was no need for the Supreme Court to interfere at this stage, the bench said.

Living legacy: Teen's organs give fresh hope to 5 people in Kerala

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

A 17-year-old girl, who was declared brain dead, has given a fresh lease of life to five persons in Kerala: The transplant of one of her organs was carried out using a commercial flight for the first time.

Ayona Monson, daughter of K M Monson and Anitha of Kerala's Kannur district, sustained serious injuries after falling from the building of Payyavur Sacred Hearts Higher Secondary School on January 12.

She was declared brain dead on Wednesday. Subsequently, her family — comprising parents and two siblings — decided to donate her organs.

One of her kidneys suited a 27-year-old patient at the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College Hospital. Owing to the distance, the authorities explored the option of transporting the organ in a commercial aircraft.

Thus it was that the kidney was brought to Thiruvananthapuram by an IndiGo flight. Dr Namitha, an organ-transplant coordinator at the Kannur government medical college, accompanied it.

State Health Minister Veena George's office confirmed in a statement that it was the first time in the state that an organ was transported in a commercial flight.

Ayona's other kidney and liver were transplanted in patients in Kozhikode, and eyes in patients in Kannur.

The Kerala State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation — a government entity — coordinated the organ transplant procedures.

Meanwhile, the police probe into the death of Ayona was said to be progressing. There were suspicions that she was disturbed over her mother's plans to go abroad for a job.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

I'VE BEEN BINGEING THIS AMAZING SERIES THAT'S REALLY GOT ME ON THE EDGE OF MY SEAT!
SOUNDS EXCITING!
IT'S FULL OF MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE...AND YOU JUST NEVER KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN NEXT!!
WOW!
IS IT A CRIME THRILLER OR AN ACTION MOVIE?
NEITHER! IT'S THE NEW SEASON OF "THE GREAT BRITISH BAKING SHOW"!!

Hagar The Horrible

THAT'S UNSIGHTLY!
OH, PLEASE! THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH A CLOTHESLINE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN!
I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT THE CLOTHESLINE!

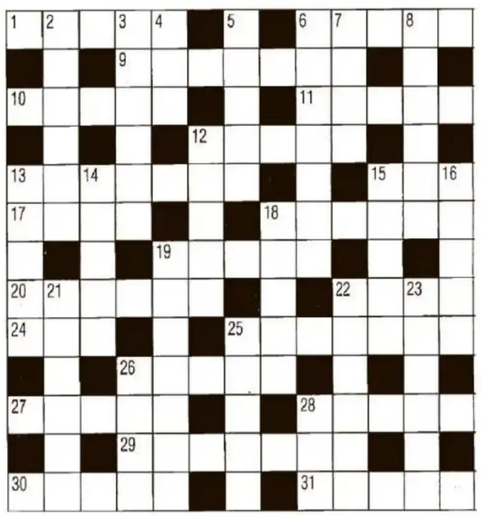
Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

RIDING AROUND ON THE BACK OF YOUR MOTHER'S BICYCLE IN THE HOT SUN IS NOT MY IDEA OF LIVING...
AT THE END OF THE DAY I FEEL LIKE A FRIED EGG...
THE ONLY THING THAT HELPS IS WHEN SHE ACCIDENTALLY DRIVES US THROUGH A..
... SPRINKLER!

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12333



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 One of the beer drinker's overheads? (5)
6 Unfairly shut out for nothing, in a way (5)
9 Exciting or possibly exploiting (7)
10 Be curiously intrusive (5)
11 Fear of not having a right arm? (5)
12 Open a page mistakenly (5)
13 Breakdown of French cable system (7)
15 Deception by the FBI? (3)
17 An element of helpfulness in diet (4)
18 Appeal to a person to buzz off (6)
19 Spared some terrible devastation (5)
20 Fatheads' afterthought for a friend (6)
22 She's built rather like Mimi or Gigi (4)
24 Her denial helped make history (3)
25 One sustained by so much hot air? (7)
26 Where you can get torn to pieces out of the ring! (5)
27 Drift aloft, perhaps (5)
28 Points to the fully finished boot (5)
29 Tending to calm water (7)
30 Woods, in two senses, may be seen near one (5)
31 Stuffy fellow possibly cuddled a lot (5)

DOWN
2 Substitute campanologist? (6)
3 One who worked like a horse? (6)
4 The flight of Sancho Panza (3)
5 Superior and wise custom? (5)
6 What the cur did when photographed (7)
7 Look round to leg, perhaps? (4)
8 A highwayman, but did he turn out pious? (6)
12 Passing under the name of "Aka"? (5)
13 Dump at the roadside (5)
14 Benefit of getting ahead in transport (5)
15 What's been written of oil spillage? (5)
16 As a statesman, Ernest ... (5)
18 ... was rather like Aneurin (5)
19 Ancient skill in bridge building (7)
21 Dictator affected by the French Revolution, initially (6)
22 Rob of a coat (6)
23 The rotten fellow tripped up! (6)
25 Kind of knife with a curve, that is (5)
26 Something binding on record? (4)
28 White? Not he, the clever fellow! (3)

EASY

ACROSS
1 Italian island (5)
6 Noise (5)
9 Consented (7)
10 Small cake (5)
11 Planet (5)
12 Desires (5)
13 Prominent musician (7)
15 Unit of resistance (3)
17 Proper (4)
18 Taste (6)
19 Wild (5)
20 Mend (6)
22 Prima donna (4)
24 Attempt (3)
25 Denial (7)
26 Salivate (5)
27 Forbidden (5)
28 Berate (5)
29 Private eye,informally (7)
30 Hell (5)
31 Hidden store (5)

DOWN
2 Mooring device (6)
3 Haphazard (6)
4 Frozen water (3)
5 Vital organ (5)
6 Many (7)
7 Poems (4)
8 Zero (6)
12 Guide (5)
13 Recreation (5)
14 Cheeky, informally (5)
15 Desert's fertile patch (5)
16 Honour (5)
18 Board (5)
19 Stringy (7)
21 Mistakes (6)
22 Sweet (6)
23 Underground rooms (6)
25 Excite (5)
26 Venetian prince (4)
28 Distress call (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12332

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 4, Natur-E 7, Atalanta 8, Ps-alms 10, C-hips 13, P-ops 14, Halo 15, Boo-r 16, Gnu 17, Shoo 19, I-sis 21, Dead right 23, Turn 24, Else 26, Sad 27, Des-k 29, E-dam 32, Flat 33, Stile 34, A-L-lies 35, El-Dora-do 36, Bridal.
DOWN: 1, Match 2, Cavil 3, Caps 4, Napoo 5, Teas 6, Romans 9, Sprigs 11, Ham 12, P-oser 13, Po-or-e-st 15, Bod 16, Git 18, H-an-dle 20, Sheet 21, Dud 22, Ilk 23, Tail-or 25, Pal 28, Easel 30, Div.-an 31, Melon 32, Find 33, Soot.

EASY
ACROSS: 4, Entice 7, Audition 8, Regret 10, Abuts 13, Boys 14, Lira 15, Pole 16, Din 17, Pool 19, Foot 21, Mint sauce 23, Purl 24, Tile 26, Pig 27, Over 29, Avid 32, Fair 33, Snipe 34, Preens 35, Incident 36, Pellet.
DOWN: 1, Fatal 2, Odour 3, Otis 4, Enrol 5, Tugs 6, Credit 9, Eyeful 11, Big 12, Tapir 13, Bolster 15, Pot 16, Doe 18, On loan 20, Ocean 21, Mug 22, Air 23, Pierce 25, Zip 28, Visit 30, Vixen 31, Death 32, Feel 33, Shin.

◆SU-DO-KU-6805◆

	7			2		1		
	2				1		3	4
6								
				1	3		5	7
		2	9		5	8		
4	5		8	6				
								8
8	9		5				6	
		3		7			4	

medium

SOLUTION TO 6804

9	1	8	7	5	6	2	4	3
6	2	3	8	4	1	7	9	5
7	4	5	9	2	3	8	6	1
3	8	1	2	9	7	4	5	6
2	5	9	3	6	4	1	8	7
4	7	6	1	8	5	9	3	2
8	9	7	6	3	2	5	1	4
1	6	4	5	7	9	3	2	8
5	3	2	4	1	8	6	7	9

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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E1 H4 H4 C3 T1 T1 A1	Triple Word Score	RACK 1
I1 A1 L1 A1 X8 I1 E1		RACK 2
A1 A1 T1 M3 U1 O1 T1	Double Word Score	RACK 3
R1 E1 I1 A1 P3 L1 P3	3rd Letter Triple	RACK 4

PAR SCORE 160-170
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

S1	W4	E1	E1	T1	I1	E1	RACK 1 = 80
F4	E1	T1	T1	L1	E1	S1	RACK 2 = 80
A1	P3	P3	E1	A1	R1	S1	RACK 3 = 83
C3	A1	R1	P3	E1	T1	S1	RACK 4 = 83

PAR SCORE 215-225 JUDD'S TOTAL 326

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

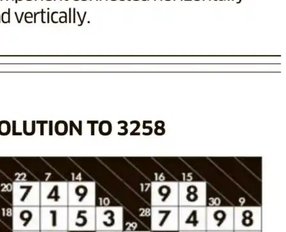
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TNYTU

FSTHI

URBNEK

DYRIHB


Wow! Did you see that break? This ground is pretty hard.
Let me check to see if we have backups.
USING A JACKHAMMER TO BORE HOLES INTO THE GRANITE WAS WORKING UNTIL IT ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Ans. here: ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: STOMP AVOID WRENCH ADJUST
Answer: Once the "Eagle" had landed, an anxious Buzz Aldrin wanted Neil Armstrong to — STEP ON IT

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HITORI-3259

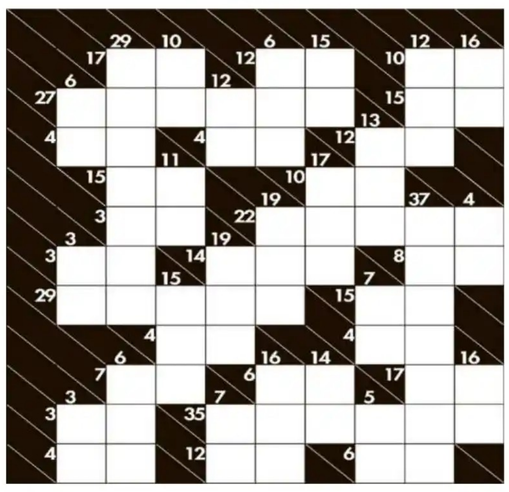
5	1	8	6	2	4	7	3
3	4	6	1	4	2	3	6
3	2	1	6	4	5	7	8
2	8	1	4	6	1	6	5
1	6	6	1	5	7	4	1
2	3	7	5	6	8	6	1
7	6	4	2	3	1	1	6
4	5	8	3	1	6	8	8

SOLUTION TO 3258

2	5	■	7	4	6	8	■
■	1	2	■	5	■	6	7
4	■	8	1	7	2	■	3
8	7	■	2	1	■	4	6
■	4	7	■	8	3	5	■
6	■	5	4	2	■	7	1
5	8	3	6	■	7	■	2
■	2	■	5	6	4	1	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3259



SOLUTION TO 3258

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3798

■	6						3	■
2	■				8		4	
	9	■			1	■		
			■	6	■			
	8			7	9	2		
	5		■		2	7		
		■				8		
	■				3		■	
1	3							■

SOLUTION TO 3797

6	4	3	7	5	2	1	8	9
2	7	5	9	1	8	6	4	3
8	1	9	4	6	3	2	7	5
5	2	6	8	9	7	3	1	4
4	8	1	2	3	6	5	9	7
9	3	7	5	4	1	8	2	6
7	5	8	6	2	9	4	3	1
3	6	2	1	7	4	9	5	8
1	9	4	3	8	5	7	6	2

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Singapore PM Wong removes Indian-origin LoP Pritam Singh

SINGAPORE, PTI: Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong has removed Indian-origin Workers' Party chief Pritam Singh as Leader of the Opposition (LoP), and asked the opposition party to nominate another Member of Parliament (MP) to fill the position.

Pritam Singh

In a statement on Thursday, Wong said: "Having considered the matter carefully, I have decided that Singh's criminal convictions, taken together with Parliament's considered view of his unsuitability, make it no longer tenable for him to continue as the LoP."

His decision will take effect immediately.

Wong added that his decision is necessary to uphold the rule of law, as well as the dignity and integrity of Parliament.

This means that Singh will no longer be given the privileges of the position which include the right of first reply during parliamentary debates, more time for his speeches and twice the allowance of an elected MP.

US seizes another tanker ahead of Trump-Machado meeting

WASHINGTON, REUTERS: The United States has seized another Venezuela-linked tanker, United States officials said on Thursday, ahead of a meeting between President Donald Trump and Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado.

The seizure marks the sixth vessel targeted since mid-December that was either carrying Venezuelan oil or had done so in the past. The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the seizure took place in the Caribbean.

The United States military's Southern Command confirmed the pre-dawn operation, saying American forces apprehended Motor/Tanker Veronica "without incident." It said the Veronica was "operating in defiance of President Trump's established quarantine of sanctioned vessels in the Caribbean."

"The only oil leaving Venezuela will be oil that is coordinated properly and lawfully," Southern Command said in a statement.

Guyana-flagged Aframax tanker Veronica departed empty from Venezuelan waters in early January, according to shipping documents from state company PDVSA.

US to wait and watch as Iran killings ease, says Trump

Iran denies plans to execute protesters

DUBAI/WASHINGTON, REUTERS

US President Donald Trump said he had been told that killings during Iran's crackdown on protests were easing and that he believed there was no current plan for large-scale executions, adopting a wait-and-see posture after earlier threatening intervention.

After Iran's foreign minister said the country had "no plan" to hang people, Iranian state media reported on Thursday that a 26-year-old man arrested during protests in the city of Karaj would not be given the death sentence.

Rights organisation Hengaw, which reported earlier this week that Erfan Soltani was due to be executed on Wednesday, said a previously communicated order for his execution had been postponed, citing his relatives.

Iranian state media said that while Soltani was being charged with colluding against "internal security and propaganda activities against the regime", the death penalty does not apply to such charges.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene on behalf of protesters, where the clerical establishment has cracked down hard on unrest since December 28.

People walk in the Grand Bazaar in Tehran, Iran, on Thursday. REUTERS

Protests appear to abate

People inside the country, reached by Reuters on Wednesday and Thursday, said the protests appeared to have abated since Monday. Information flows have been hampered by an internet blackout lasting a week.

Tensions escalated on Wednesday, with Iran saying it had warned neighbours it would hit American bases in the region in the event of US strikes, and a US official saying the US was withdrawing some personnel from bases in the region.

US imposes sanctions on Iran over crackdown on protesters

The United States on Thursday imposed sanctions on five Iranian officials it accused of being behind the crackdown on protests and warned it was tracking Iranian leaders' funds being wired to banks around the world, Reuters reports from Washington.

The US Treasury Department in a statement said it imposed sanctions on the Secretary of the Supreme Council for National Security as well as Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and law enforcement forces commanders, accusing them of being architects of the crackdown. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in a video on Thursday said Washington's message to Iran's leaders was clear: "US Treasury knows, that like rats on a sinking ship, you are frantically wiring funds stolen from Iranian families to banks and financial institutions around the world."

Trump threatens to use insurrection law against anti-ICE protests

MINNEAPOLIS, AP/PTI: President Donald Trump on Thursday threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act, allowing him to deploy troops as protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) persist in Minneapolis.

Trump made the threat after a federal officer shot a man in the leg in Minneapolis on Wednesday after being attacked with a shovel and broom handle. The incident further heightened the sense of fear and anger radiating across the city, a week after an immigration agent fatally shot a woman in the head.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to invoke the rarely used federal law to deploy the US military or federalise the National Guard for domestic law enforcement, over the objections of state governors. "If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job, I will institute the INSURRECTION ACT, which many Presidents have done before me, and quickly put an end to the travesty that is taking place in that once great State," Trump said in social media post.

In Minneapolis, smoke filled the street on Wednesday night near the site of the latest shooting as federal officers wearing gas masks and helmets fired tear gas at a small group of protesters.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Roscosmos cosmonaut Oleg Platonov is helped out of the SpaceX Dragon Endeavour spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship after they re-entered the earth near San Diego, California, on Thursday. AP/PTI

Ailing astronaut returns to Earth early in first medical evacuation

An ailing astronaut returned to Earth with three others on Thursday, ending their space station mission more than a month early in Nasa's first medical evacuation, AP/PTI reports from Cape Canaveral.

SpaceX guided the capsule to a middle-of-the-night splashdown in the Pacific near San Diego, less than 11 hours after the astronauts exited the International Space Station. Their first stop was a hospital for an overnight stay. "Obviously, we took this action (early return) because it was a serious medical condition," Nasa's new administrator Jared Isaacman said following splashdown. "The astronaut in question is fine right now, in good spirits and going through the proper medical checks." It was an unexpected finish to a mission that began in August and left the orbiting lab with only one American and two Russians on board. Nasa and SpaceX said they would try to move up the launch of a fresh crew of four; liftoff is currently targeted for mid-February. Officials have refused to identify the astronaut who developed the health problem last week or explain what happened, citing medical privacy.

Man held for robbing Hindu temple

Police on Thursday said they have arrested a man after valuable gold and other jewellery were stolen from a prominent Hindu temple in Pakistan's Karachi, PTI reports from Karachi.

The theft was committed at the Lakshmi Narayanan temple in Nabi Baksh Dholi Khata area of old Karachi on Wednesday. A senior police officer at the Nabi Baksh police station, in whose jurisdiction the theft took place, said the culprit was arrested within 18 hours with the help of CCTV footage and mobile location. ASP Faiz Samoo said police have recovered gold and other jewellery and artefacts from the arrested person. "He has confessed to also committing thefts at some other smaller temples in the city," Samoo said. The police got into action after the Pakistani Hindu Council lodged a complaint and took the matter up with higher authorities.

Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Gul Hassan presents his letter of credence to Russia's President Vladimir Putin at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow on Thursday. REUTERS

Russia expels British diplomat

Russia on Thursday expelled a British diplomat suspected of spying after FSB counter-intelligence established his links with UK secret services, PTI reports from Moscow.

The Federal Security Service (FSB) stated that Gareth Samuel Davies, a secretary at the British Embassy in Moscow, is working for the UK secret services. UK's Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Danae Dholakia, was summoned to launch a formal protest and demand the suspected spy's departure from Russia within two weeks. In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said, "Moscow will not tolerate activities of undeclared agents of British special services on Russian territory."

Lankan prez reaches out to Tamils

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Thursday assured the minority Tamils that he would build a country free of racism and rich in national unity, PTI reports from Colombo.

"I know that many of you here placed your trust in us at the last general election. For the first time, we won the Jaffna District, which means you have placed your trust in us," said Dissanayake, who is on a visit to Jaffna, the cultural capital of the Tamils, marking the Tamil Thai Pongal day. "I assure you that we will not allow that trust to be betrayed even in the slightest. We will build a country free of racism and rich in national unity, and we will create a better future for your children," he said. "We will build a country where everyone can live happily. I give you my assurance that we will discharge our responsibilities tirelessly," he added.

European troops arrive in Greenland

Fundamental disagreement with US, says Denmark

NUUK (GREENLAND), AP/PTI

A Royal Danish Air Force Lockheed C-130J Super Hercules is parked at the Nuuk international airport, the day after it arrived with Danish military personnel, on Thursday. AFP

Troops from several European countries, including France, Germany, Norway and Sweden, are arriving in Greenland to help boost the Arctic island's security after talks between representatives of Denmark, Greenland and the US on Wednesday highlighted "fundamental disagreement" between the Trump administration and European allies.

"The first French military elements are already en route" and "others will follow," French President Emmanuel Macron said on Wednesday, as French authorities said about 15 French soldiers from the mountain infantry unit were already in Nuuk for a military exercise. Germany will deploy a reconnaissance team of 13 personnel on Thursday, its Defence Ministry said.

Denmark announced it would increase its military presence in Greenland, with Nato allies joining them, just as the Danish and Greenlandic foreign ministers met with White House representatives on Wednesday in Washington to discuss Trump's intentions to take over the island in order to tap its mineral resources and protect the security of the Arctic region amid rising Russian and Chinese interest.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Rasmussen, flanked by his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt, said a "fundamental disagreement" over Greenland remains after they held talks with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Russia backs Trump's claim on Ukraine 'delaying' deal

MOSCOW, AP/PTI

Moscow agrees with US President Donald Trump's view that Ukraine is holding up a peace deal to end the almost four years of fighting since Russia invaded its neighbour, a Kremlin official said on Thursday.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, "Yes, we can agree with it, it's indeed so." His comments came after Trump said in published remarks Wednesday that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is an obstacle in US-led peace talks.

That assessment is at odds with the sentiment of European officials, who have repeatedly accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of stalling in negotiations while his bigger army tries to push deeper into Ukraine and Russia relentlessly bombards Ukrainian cities.

Kyiv and Moscow still appear publicly far apart on their terms for a peace deal. "I think he's ready to make a deal," Trump was quoted as saying of the Russian president in an interview with Reuters. "I think Ukraine is less ready to make a deal," he said, naming Zelenskyy as obstructing a settlement.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who along with many European and Nato member nations has strongly backed Ukraine, pushed back on Trump's reported comments. "It is Russia who rejected the peace plan prepared by the US," not Zelenskyy, Tusk posted on X on Thursday.

Putin said on Thursday that Moscow, like Ukraine, demands security guarantees as part of a prospective peace deal. "We must proceed from the premise that security must be truly universal, and therefore equal and indivisible, and it cannot be ensured for some at the expense of the security of others," Putin said after receiving credentials from foreign ambassadors.

झारखण्ड राज्य बिवरेजेज कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड, राँची
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पत्रांक– JSBCL/स्था०–360 / 2022–23 / Vol- III/63 दिनांक– 15.01.2026

–शुद्धि पत्र–

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय द्वारा प्रकाशित अति अल्पकालिन ई–आमंत्रण पत्रांक सं०–JSBCL/01 दिनांक– 10.01.2026 जिसका Advt. P.R. No-370578 दिनांक–10.01.2026 है, के आलोक में मदिरा संचयन गोदाम हेतू इच्छा की अभिव्यक्ति के निविदा के नोट संख्या– 02 में वर्णीत तथ्य को निम्न हद तक संशोधित किया **जाता है** :–

क्र०	पूर्व में प्रकाशित	संशोधित
01	इच्छा की अभिव्यक्ति हेतू आवेदन ऑनलाईन https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in माध्यम से ही स्वीकार की जायेगी एवं इसकी भौतिक प्रति राँची स्थित झारखण्ड राज्य बिवरेजेज कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड मुख्यालय में जमा की जानी है।	इच्छा की अभिव्यक्ति हेतू आवेदन ऑनलाईन https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in माध्यम से ही स्वीकार की जायेगी।

ह०/–
महाप्रबंधक (संचालन),
झारखण्ड राज्य बिवरेजेज कॉरपोरेशन लि०,
झारखण्ड, राँची।

PR 370682 (Excise) 25-26 (D)

झारखण्ड सरकार
भवन निर्माण विभाग

झारखण्ड सरकार के भवन निर्माण विभाग के लिए वास्तुविद् (आर्किटेक्ट) का पैनल तैयार करने हेतु अभिरूचि आमंत्रण सूचना

भवन निर्माण विभाग द्वारा Comprehensive Architectural Services हेतु वास्तुविद् (आर्किटेक्ट) का पैनल तैयार कर परामर्शी के रूप में चयन किया जाना है।

राज्य सरकार द्वारा अनुमोदित शर्तों पर इच्छुक वास्तुविद् (आर्किटेक्ट) से आवश्यक प्रस्ताव आमंत्रित की जाती है –

1. Condition of Engagement को bcd.jharkhand.gov.in में भी देखा जा सकता है।
2. Comprehensive Architectural Services हेतु सूचीबद्ध वास्तुविद् (आर्किटेक्ट) से कार्य कराए जाने के लिए राज्य सरकार की बाध्यता नहीं होगी। विभाग महत्वपूर्ण भवनों में आवश्यकतानुसार चयनित पैनल के अतिरिक्त अन्य वास्तुविदों की सेवा लेने को स्वतंत्र होगा।
3. वास्तुविद् (आर्किटेक्ट) इस आशय का शपथ पत्र समर्पित करेंगे कि उनके द्वारा दी गई सभी सूचनायें एवं समर्पित कागजात सही एवं सत्य हैं।
4. अभियंता प्रमुख, भवन निर्माण विभाग की अध्यक्षता में गठित चयन समिति का निर्णय अंतिम होगा।
5. अनुमोदित शर्तों के आधार पर प्राप्त प्रस्तावों की जांच के पश्चात् पैनेल तैयार किया जाएगा, जो वर्ष 2026–27 से 2028–2029 (तीन वर्ष) तक के लिए मान्य होगा।
6. वास्तुविद् (आर्किटेक्ट), जो उपरोक्त शर्त्तों के तहत कार्य करना चाहते हैं, वे **दिनांक–24.01.2026 से 24.02.2026 को अपराह्न 05:30 बजे** तक bcd.jharkhand.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन आवेदन समर्पित करेंगे। हार्ड कॉपी स्वीकार नहीं होगा।
7. विभाग में सूचीबद्ध वास्तुविद् (Empanelled Architect) जिनका Empanelment वित्तीय वर्ष 2025–26 में समाप्त हो रहा है और वे उपरोक्त शर्त्तों के साथ कार्य करने हेतु इच्छुक हैं, अनिवार्य रूप से ऑनलाईन आवेदन समर्पित करेंगे।

For more information kindly visit bcd.jharkhand.gov.in

अभियंता प्रमुख
भवन निर्माण विभाग।

PR 370699 (Building) 25-26 (D)

Wikipedia inks AI deals with Microsoft, Meta and Perplexity to mark 25 yrs

LONDON, AP/PTI: Wikipedia unveiled new business deals with a slew of artificial intelligence companies on Thursday as it marked its 25th anniversary.

The online crowdsourced encyclopedia revealed that it has signed up AI companies including Amazon, Meta Platforms, Perplexity, Microsoft and France's Mistral AI.

Wikipedia is one of the last bastions of the early internet, but that original vision of a free online space has been clouded by the dominance of Big Tech platforms and the rise of generative AI chatbots trained on content scraped from the web.

Aggressive data collection methods by AI developers, including from Wikipedia's vast repository of free knowledge, has raised questions about who ultimately pays for the artificial intelligence boom.

The Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit that runs the site, signed Google as one of its first customers in 2022 and announced other agreements last year with smaller AI players like search engine Ecosia. The new agreements will help one of the world's most popular websites monetize heavy traffic from AI companies. They're paying to access Wikipedia content "at a volume and speed designed specifically for their needs," the foundation said.

It did not provide financial or other details.

While AI training has sparked legal battles elsewhere over copyright and other issues, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales said he welcomes it.

DATA LICENSING

- The deals are designed to generate revenue from heavy AI usage of Wikipedia's data, as bots increasingly scrape its content for training large language models.
- Wikipedia said the agreements provide AI companies with content tailored to their needs, marking a shift from free scraping to paid.

Grok blocked from undressing images

BANGKOK, AP/PTI: Elon Musk's AI chatbot Grok won't be able to edit photos to portray real people in revealing clothing in places where that is illegal, according to a statement posted on X.

The announcement late Wednesday followed a global backlash over sexualised images of women and children, including bans and warnings by some governments. The pushback included an investigation announced Wednesday by the state of California, the U.S.'s most populous, into the proliferation of nonconsensual sexually explicit material produced using Grok that it said was harassing women and girls.

Initially, media queries about the problem drew only the response, "legacy media lies." Musk's company, xAI, now says it will geoblock content if it violates laws in a particular place. "We have implemented technological measures to prevent the Grok account from allowing the editing of images of real people in revealing clothing such as bikinis, underwear and other revealing attire," it said.

Model Bella Hadid attends the season one premiere of FX's "The Beauty" at The Museum of Modern Art in New York on Wednesday. AFP

Dispute relates to how firm used India-Mauritius tax treaty to claim exemptions

SC rules against Tiger Global in Walmart deal tax case

NEW DELHI, REUTERS

Landmark Ruling

- The Supreme Court had been hearing the case since January 2025
- Case seen as setting precedent for global investors in India
- Tiger Global had been locked in dispute with Indian tax authorities over deal
- The apex court says deal designed as 'tax avoidance arrangement'

The Supreme Court has ruled that Tiger Global's $1.6 billion stake sale in e-commerce firm Flipkart to Walmart is subject to taxes, handing a win to New Delhi in a landmark ruling on companies' use of international tax treaties.

Keenly watched by foreign investors, the dispute relates to how the US investment firm used the India-Mauritius tax treaty to claim tax exemptions and New Delhi's fierce objections to it.

The ruling will set a precedent for how India applies tax principles in future cross-border deals.

Tiger Global had been locked in a legal tussle with Indian tax authorities over the 2018 stake sale, a deal that was part of US retail giant Walmart's $16 billion acquisition of Flipkart.

Tiger Global did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the ruling.

'Impermissible tax avoidance arrangement'

Supreme Court judge Justice R Mahadevan said Tiger Global's transaction was designed as an "impermissible tax avoidance arrangement". It, therefore, cannot claim an exemption from paying tax on the profit from the stake sale, he added.

"This is a judgment which is now watched today all over the world, not just domestically," N Venkataraman, the Indian Government's top lawyer, said in court following the decision.

The stake sold — 17% according to local media reports — was at the time held by Tiger Global's units in Mauritius. And the investment firm argued that the India-Mauritius tax treaty exempted it from paying tax on its profits from the transaction.

Indian tax authorities, however, said Tiger Global's Mauritius units served merely as a conduit for the US parent company, and it had improperly used the treaty to avoid paying tax.

Tiger Global has said that description of its subsidiaries is incorrect.

The Supreme Court had been hearing the case since January 2025 as Indian tax authorities challenged a previous Delhi High Court ruling in favour of Tiger Global that found no wrongdoing.

Walmart competes with Amazon in India's thriving e-commerce market, where online shopping has boomed in recent years. Walmart has not previously commented on the matter.

Flipkart gets new CECO ahead of IPO

NEW DELHI, PTI: Flipkart on Thursday announced the appointment of Jane Duke as the Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer (CECO) for the group, a move aimed at strengthening governance structures as the e-commerce major prepares for its IPO.

Duke will report to Chris Cyrenne, the Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer at parent Walmart International, and will work closely with Flipkart Group CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy.

She comes with close to three decades of experience in public-sector enforcement and corporate compliance. Her most recent stint was at Tyson Foods, where she functioned as V-P and Associate General Counsel, following a term as Chief Compliance Officer.

Earlier in her career, she served at the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Arkansas for more than 10 years. "Her extensive experience across ethics, compliance, and governance in complex, global organisations will add significant value in reinforcing our commitment to transparency and ethical business practices. Jane's leadership will play a critical role in supporting sustainable, long-term value creation for all stakeholders. As we continue to scale, building strong institutional foundations and a culture of integrity is central to how we create long-term value," Krishnamurthy said.

In December 2025, the NCLT approved the merger of eight Flipkart entities, taking the e-commerce major a step closer to obtaining an Indian domicile.

Flipkart Minutes logs sharp rise in festive demand

BENGALURU, DHNS: Flipkart Minutes observed a sharp rise in demand for festive essentials during Makara Sankranti, as more customers turned to quick commerce for last-minute shopping essentials (between January 12 and 14, 2026). The most-delivered products during this period included rice, sugar, havan items, pulses, spices, and kites, with rice emerging as the single most-ordered item.

Demand for pooja essentials such as camphor and agarbatti grew by more than 35%, reflecting heightened focus on timely festival preparations. The most frequently ordered combo during the festival period was rice, ghee, and jaggery.

Bengaluru emerged as the leading hub for last-minute orders on Flipkart Minutes, with 9 AM morning rush and the 7- 8 PM evening window witnessing maximum demand. Festive orders on Flipkart Minutes grew significantly with sweets, pooja essentials, and gifting items leading the charge.

India's trade deficit widens to $25.04 billion in December

Commerce Secretary says India-US trade deal very near

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

TRADE MOVES

$38.51 bn ↑
Goods exports rise **1.87%** in Dec 2025, from **$37.80 bn** in the same month of the previous year

$63.55 bn ↑
Goods imports clock a rise of **8.7%** during the month, over **$58.43 bn** in Dec 2024

$330.29 bn
During April-December this fiscal, merchandise exports rise **2.44%**

$578.61 bn
Merchandise imports jump **5.9%** during the period

Top export hubs: In the April-December period, the US, the UAE, and China emerge India's top-3 export destinations

India's trade deficit widened to $25.04 billion in December due to subdued exports amid geopolitical challenges and trade restrictions, even as a top official claimed that the country and the US are "very close" to conclude a deal that would lower tariffs.

India's exports increased by 1.87% to $38.51 billion in December, from $37.80 billion recorded in the same month of the previous year. The country's goods imports climbed to $63.55 billion during the month under review, registering an increase of 8.7% over $58.43 billion recorded in December 2024, as per data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday.

Trade deficit widened from $20.63 billion in December 2024, to $25.04 billion in December 2025. In November 2025, the trade deficit stood at $24.53 billion.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said exports remained in positive territory despite global uncertainties.

On the proposed India-US bilateral trade agreement, Agrawal said the two countries are constantly engaged in negotiations. There are pending issues being talked about. It's very near, but we can't put a deadline. Deal will happen when both sides are ready, and we're ready to announce," he said.

He informed that Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer held a virtual meeting last month to discuss the proposed trade deal. "There are pending issues being talked about. It's very near, but we can't put a deadline. Deal will happen when both sides are ready," Agrawal told reporters.

The Commerce Secretary underlined that despite the high tariffs, India's monthly export to the US has averaged around $7 billion. India's export to the US in the first nine months of the current fiscal was 9.75% higher, when compared with the corresponding period of the last year.

In the April-December period, the US, the UAE, and China were India's top-3 export destinations. Exports to China surged by 36.68% year-on-year, during this period.

Cumulatively, during April-December this fiscal, India's merchandise exports increased by 2.44% to $330.29 billion, while imports jumped by 5.9% to $578.61 billion, leaving a trade deficit of $248.32 billion during the first nine-month of 2025-26.

India's total exports (merchandise and services combined) declined by 1.01% to $74.01 billion in December, while total imports rose by 6.17% to $80.94 billion.

Going by the trend, according to Agrawal, India's overall exports are likely to cross $850 billion in the current fiscal.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President SC Ralhan said India's exports performance so far in the current fiscal has been encouraging, given the volatility in global trade flows.

"India's top export destinations—the US, the UAE, China, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Bangladesh, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and Hong Kong — demonstrate a well-diversified and resilient export footprint," Ralhan added.

"This diversification is particularly critical at a time when global trade routes are being reshaped due to geo-political conflicts, sanctions, shipping disruptions and strategic realignments," he mentioned.

Sugar mills in Karnataka stare at loss to the tune of Rs 4,000 crore

MAHESH KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Sugar mills in Karnataka are staring at huge losses this year, owing to payment of additional cane price to farmers, lower allocation of ethanol by oil marketing companies (OMCs), and non-revision of MSP for sugar.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in his order dated November 8, 2025, ordered sugar mills to pay Rs 400 per tonne more than the fair and remunerative price (FRP) to farmers. As a result of this unscientific and illegal order, mills are likely to suffer a loss of between Rs 50 crore and Rs 200 crore, said Yogesh Shrimant Patil, President, The South Indian Sugar Mills Association (SISMA), Karnataka.

Going by this estimate, the cumulative loss of sugar mills will be in the range of Rs 4,000 crore, sources said.

In a memorandum submitted to the chief minister, Patil urged him to lead a delegation to the Central Government to demand an increase in the MSP of sugar from Rs 31 per kg to Rs 42 per kg. He has also demanded the state government to sign a power purchase agreement for 10 years with sugar mills to buy surplus power generated from the mills at Rs 6.5 per unit. The association has also demanded purchase of entire ethanol produced by the mills.

"The payment of additional cane price will only compound the problems of sugar mills this year as they are already burdened with the lower allocation of ethanol by the OMCs and non-revision of MSP for sugar," he said.

Siddaramaiah had ordered the sugar mills to pay Rs 3,300 per tonne of sugarcane with a recovery rate of 11.25%. Of this, Rs 3,250 will be paid by factory owners and Rs 50 by the government. For a recovery rate of 10.25%, Rs 3,200 will be provided per tonne of sugarcane.

The decision came after the CM's extensive discussions with sugar factory owners and farmers' representatives in November last year.

Dip in ethanol allocation

The OMCs have reduced the ethanol allocation to sugar mills in Karnataka for blending with fuels by 9.25% over last year. Mills have been asked to supply 98 crore litres of ethanol (produced from sugar-based feedstock) for 2025-26, compared to 108 crore litres for 2024-25. The allocation is just about 45% of the annual installed capacity of the mills, which is about 217 crore litres.

The industry is also losing very heavily due to the non-revision of ethanol prices in the last three years and minimum sugar price for the last seven years.

The Indian Sugar & BioEnergy Manufacturing Association (ISMA) said while fair and remunerative prices of sugarcane have been revised upward at Rs 355 per quintal for 2025-26 season, ethanol procurement prices from sugarcane-based feedstocks, such as sugarcane juice and B-Heavy Molasses (BHM) have not been revised since 2022-23. BHM ethanol is currently priced at Rs 60.73 per litre and syrup/juice ethanol at Rs 65.61 per litre.

"Ethanol production from BHM/juice requires some sugar sacrifice, which needs to be compensated for production of ethanol. Production costs and other costs are rising, but due to no revision in ethanol procurement prices, distilleries are facing cash crunch. The issue has been compounded by lower allocations of ethanol in the 2025-26 season resulting in serious issues," Deepak Ballani, Director General of ISMA, told *DH*.

State realises Rs 4.71 L cr investment in 11 months: MB Patil

BENGALURU, DHNS: Investment proposals worth Rs 4.71 lakh crore have been realised by the end of December out of the Rs 10.27 lakh crore commitments secured at the Global Investors' Meet (GIM) held in February 2025, Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil said on Thursday.

MB Patil

Sharing a progress card of the investments received and cleared in Karnataka, ahead of his departure for Davos in Switzerland to participate in the World Economic Forum (WEF) from January 19 to 23, Patil said 46% of the investment agreements (MoUs) signed at the GIM have already translated into actual investments.

Of the Rs 5.66 lakh crore investment commitments in the manufacturing sector, Rs 3.22 lakh crore has materialised. Similarly, in the renewable energy sector, Rs 1.41 lakh crore has flowed in against commitments of Rs 4.25 lakh crore, while the infrastructure sector has recorded actual investments of Rs 8,500 crore against commitments of Rs 45,000 crore. This represents a success rate of 58%, 33%, and 19%, respectively, he said.

"We have not stopped at the MoU stage alone," the minister said. Once investment proposals are submitted, processes such as application handling, land allotment, statutory clearances and approvals are being facilitated through a fully-digital, single-window system. Under this mechanism, more than 150 services across over 30 departments have been integrated. As a result, sectors such as manufacturing, ESDM, semiconductors and food processing are witnessing a steady flow of investments, he explained.

Over the past year, investment proposals in the state have been materialised at a faster pace, reflecting the creation of a more industry-friendly ecosystem than earlier, he said. Nearly 50% of all investment proposals and about 60% of proposals in the manufacturing sector have been submitted through 'Karnataka Udyog Mitra'. These outcomes reflect the success of the state's structured industrial policy and reform-oriented initiatives. "We are ensuring that no project remains confined to the MoU stage, but is taken to its logical conclusion," Patil said.

India AI push: Google unveils market access program

NEW DELHI, PTI: Google on Thursday unveiled its Market Access Program, an initiative to help startups overcome challenges in accessing global markets, as the tech giant also announced new additions to its Gemma open model family.

Google, last year, announced a record $15-billion investment that would go into building an AI infrastructure hub in Andhra Pradesh. According to the company, the latest launches support its ongoing investments in India's physical AI infrastructure, including the Global AI Hub in Visakhapatnam, to ensure Indian startups have access to high-performance compute.

Google said the Market Access Program, would help Indian startups strengthen their go-to-market efforts, shortening the journey from local pilots to global scale.

It also announced new additions to its Gemma open model family, tuned to help startups build population-scale and production-ready AI applications.

Agri sector pitches for tech, climate-smart infrastructure

NEW DELHI, PTI: Ahead of the FY27 Union Budget, agriculture industry leaders and experts are making a strong pitch for increased investments in digital infrastructure, climate-resilient farming practices, and technology adoption to transform a sector that employs nearly half the country's workforce but contributes less than a fifth to the national output.

With agriculture and allied sectors supporting about 45% of India's workforce, while contributing only around 18% to the GVA, industry voices say Budget 2026-27 presents a critical opportunity to reposition the sector as an engine of economic growth rather than just a welfare concern.

"Agriculture is increasingly being recognised not merely as a welfare sector, but as a credible engine of economic growth — one that can drive productivity, employment, rural demand and resilience," said Amit Vatsyayan, Leader, GPS-Agriculture, Livelihood, Social and Skills at EY India.

Dairy sector needs

Heritage Foods Ltd Executive Director Brahmani Nara pointed to favourable conditions created by the September 2025 GST rationalisation, which has accelerated consumer preference for high-protein, health-focused products like paneer, cheese, ghee, and butter in the organised dairy segment.

With government initiatives like the Rashtriya Gokul Mission and National Digital Livestock Mission integrating over 3,00,000 farmers into the organised ecosystem, Nara outlined three key Budget asks: subsidised access to quality feed and chromosome-sorted semen to boost animal productivity; expanding veterinary college capacity to bridge the gap between India's 68,000 registered veterinarians and the requirement of 110,000-120,000; and increased capital subsidies for mini-dairy units, particularly for women entrepreneurs.

Vatsyayan emphasised the need for scaling green infrastructure and climate-resilient irrigation through investments in micro-irrigation, watershed management, aquifer recharge and renewable-powered agri assets. "From a growth lens, these interventions also act as strong multipliers — stimulating rural demand, stabilising farm incomes and strengthening food security," he stated.

He also called for expanding public-private partnerships in storage, logistics and agri R&D to reduce post-harvest losses, and focused investments in seed systems to achieve self-reliance in pulses and other nutrition-sensitive commodities.

Digital infra push

MapMyCrop Founder and CEO Swapnil Jadhav urged the government to champion digital infrastructure and seamless credit linkages to propel precision agriculture at scale.

"Agri-drones, IoT sensors, and AI-driven analytics hold transformative potential to elevate yields, optimise water and fertilizer use, and fortify climate resilience for 140 million farm holdings," he said.

Jadhav called for targeted subsidies, robust PPPs and R&D tax incentives to fast-track integration with national platforms like AGMARK-NET and e-NAM, helping India pivot from input-heavy subsidies to a tech-powered agriculture ecosystem.

BDO India Partner for Agriculture Soumyak Biswas highlighted persistent structural challenges, including small and fragmented landholdings, inadequate investment in allied sectors, high post-harvest losses, and underfunded research.

He outlined priorities including scaling climate-smart agriculture by increasing funding for DARE, strengthening allied sectors like livestock and fisheries, empowering FPOs through market-linked strategies and credit guarantees, and incentivising diversification into horticulture, pulses and oilseeds to reduce overdependence on water-intensive crops.

NMIA crosses 1L pax footfalls within 19 days of opening

NAVI MUMBAI, DHNS: The Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) at Ulwe in Raigad district has marked a key operational milestone by crossing one lakh passengers within the first 19 days of commercial operations, reflecting strong passenger traction and a steady ramp-up in travel demand from the region.

As of January 12, 2026, the airport handled a total of 1,09,917 passengers, comprising 55,934 arriving and 53,983 departing passengers. It recorded its busiest day on January 10, 2026, with 7,345 passengers handled in a day, an NMIA spokesperson said on Thursday.

During the period December 25, 2025 — January 12, 2026, NMIA managed 734 Air Traffic Movements (ATMs), including 32 General Aviation ATMs, demonstrating growing utilisation across both scheduled and general aviation operations.

DIS-CONNECT

Ambani, telcos spar with NMIA on mobile networks

NEW DELHI, REUTERS

Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani's telecom company is among those urging the government to act over what they describe as monopolistic practices at Gautam Adani-led Adani Group's Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), saying the facility is blocking operators from providing mobile connectivity, according to a letter seen by Reuters.

Mukesh Ambani

Gautam Adani

Adani-run NMIA denied the allegations, but the dispute highlights the growing rivalry between India's two richest men, whose conglomerates increasingly compete across sectors from green energy to data centres.

The airport, located on Mumbai's outskirts, began operations in December after being inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is the latest addition to Adani's portfolio of eight airports, with plans for more.

Within days of opening, passengers complained on social media about poor or non-existent mobile coverage and raised privacy concerns after spotting billboards offering free airport Wi-Fi.

Telcos seek access to airport infra

A January 13 letter from the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) to the Centre states that Adani's airport must grant access to install equipment as required by Indian regulations for public entities, which includes airports, and that a denial has created a "monopolistic bottleneck".

In its statement, NMIA said it had deployed "state-of-the-art solutions" and that operators could partner with an entity managing the airport's in-building network infrastructure.

The COAI, which represents Ambani's Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, said it had no comment beyond the letter, which is not public.

The companies and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), did not respond to Reuters queries.

'We can't call people'

Jio leads India's telecom market with over 500 million subscribers, followed by Airtel at 314 million and Vodafone at nearly 128 million.

Online, passengers have voiced frustration that the airport's Wi-Fi cannot be accessed without mobile coverage because login requires a one-time password sent via WhatsApp.

"You'll be thankful to see free Wi-Fi banners, thinking you can at least book cabs now. You go to the Wi-Fi network and try to log in, but it requires an OTP (one time password)," X user adarsxh_baab wrote on January 13.

Adani's statement added that when network coverage is left to individual operators, they often provide "sub-optimal coverage" in sensitive areas, such as baggage handling zones. COAI also said the airport is demanding around $102,000 per operator each month — nearly $5 million annually for four carriers — to use its centralised network, an allegation Adani denied.

"We can't call people, pay for cabs or even book anything. If you're a solo traveller it's hell," X user Srihita Vanguri wrote on the platform on Sunday.

Kia launches new Carens Clavis trim

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kia India on Thursday launched the new HTE(EX) trim for its Carens Clavis (ICE) line-up, priced at Rs 12,54,900 for G1.5 petrol, Rs 13,41,900 for G1.5 turbo-petrol, and Rs 14,52,900 for D1.5 diesel (all prices ex-showroom).

The new variant is offered in a 7-seater configuration. Positioned above the existing HTE(O), the HTE(EX) offers a suite of premium convenience features, including a sky light electric sunroof — available for the first time in the G1.5 powertrain of Carens Clavis.

B'luru sizzles between winter and V-Day

Experts say a rise in sexual activity during the winter months is primarily due to the holiday season. PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

Sexual activity increases in the colder months and peaks in February, according to online and offline pharmacists

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

Sales of condoms and lubricants rise in the colder months, according to pharmacists and quick delivery apps.

Swiggy Instamart reported a big increase in users purchasing sexual wellness items in September, the end of the monsoon season.

"Throughout 2025, one in every 127 orders on Instamart included a condom," a spokesperson told *Metrolife*.

September saw a 24% spike in condom orders on the app. A single user from Chennai placed 228 condom orders over the year, totalling Rs 1.06 lakh, according to data shared by the company.

"The rise in sexual activity during the winter months is primarily due to the holiday season, when couples spend more time together for festivals or vacation. Otherwise, sex is a year-round activity," says Dr A V Lohit, sexologist with 18 years of experience.

POPULAR FLAVOURS
According to the BDCDA, chocolate, strawberry, and orange are the most popular condom flavours around Valentine's Day. Instamart says chocolate is India's favourite condom flavour.

B Thirunavukkarasu, president of the Bangalore District Chemists and Druggists Association (BDCDA), says sales of condoms and lubricants in brick-and-mortar pharmacies have dropped by up to 60% in the past year or so.

Even amid the decline, physical sales tend to increase in November, strengthen through December, hold steady in January, and peak in February, when Valentine's Day is celebrated.

In Bengaluru, Koramangala records the highest number of condom orders both online and in stores, the trend being attributed to its dense, young population.

Apps vs stores

Quick commerce platforms have changed the way consumers buy products that may be considered socially awkward to ask for in public, says a sex therapist.

People *Metrolife* spoke to expressed a preference for online purchases. "As a younger woman, I can have a safe sex life without judgment," says Priyanshi, a corporate employee.

A 45-year-old business owner says he has overheard snide remarks while buying condoms at pharmacies. "Because sex is such a taboo subject, it becomes uncomfortable to buy these products in person," he observes.

Thirunavukkarasu notes that the decline in in-store sales of condoms does not indicate a drop in demand; instead, it reflects a change in the mode of purchase. Nonetheless, pharmacies remain stocked throughout the year, especially around Valentine's Day, which is when they witness high demand from customers in their 30s. Younger customers prefer online purchases, he says.

Two websites dealing in sexual wellness products confirmed that sales pick up around September and peak around Valentine's Day.

Expert insights

Dr Lohit has noticed a behavioural shift among his patients since the advent of quick commerce platforms for intimate products. "Many are now practising safer sex because access to condoms is easier," he explains.

A sexologist who works at a hospital in Hebbal notes that improved access has led to healthier outcomes. "With lubricants and other products more readily available, many clients report greater comfort and confidence," she adds.

A book discussion meetup for the deaf

Participants discuss poems, short stories, and book excerpts using ISL

BARKHA KUMARI
TEAM METROLIFE

A series of book meetups for the deaf is gaining traction among the community in Bengaluru. At these free sessions, participants discuss poems, short stories, essays, and book excerpts through Indian Sign Language (ISL). On select occasions, when authors or allies who are not deaf are invited, ISL interpreters are brought in to facilitate communication.

The initiative, called Deaf Bookwave, began in April 2025 with nine participants. Its latest Bengaluru edition, held on January 11, drew 32 participants and included an author interaction. It has also evolved into a travelling book club, with editions held in Mysuru, Hubballi, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Delhi, Mumbai, and Jaipur.

The meetups do not follow a fixed schedule, as the community depends on venues that offer space free of cost.

Deaf Bookwave was started by 22-year-old Parmeet Singh from Delhi, who is currently studying psychology and English in Bengaluru. "Most reading spaces rely on spoken or written language, which leaves deaf people out. Deaf Bookwave was created to bring the community together and give deaf readers a space to express and explore their perspectives," shares Singh, who is a CODA (Child of deaf adults).

An avid reader of romance and poetry, Singh says the meetups have enriched his reading habit. "Different deaf readers interpret the same text in different ways, shaped by their lived experiences. These exchanges have made reading more meaningful and less isolating."

Each meetup centres on a theme, ranging from emotions to identity, love, loss, mental health, and silence. Bengaluru editions have also hosted authors such as Sunil Upasana, Yuvraj G, and Romana Shaikh.

Most regular attendees are between 18 and 35 years of age. Singh says while the meetup is open to participants under 18, their turnout remains low due to parental concerns about independent participation. This, he adds, is precisely why ISL-led, deaf-centred spaces like Deaf Bookwave are needed.

Write to @deaf_bookwave on Instagram or email deafbookwave@gmail.com.

The latest meetup of Deaf Bookwave in the city drew 32 participants.

When does grief turn into a mental health concern?

Experts decode signs to look for, what not to say, and when to seek professional help

TINI SARA ANIEN
TEAM METROLIFE

In Bengaluru, the death by suicide of a Kannada writer and publisher, has renewed focus on clinical depression stemming from grief. Police claimed she had been suffering from depression following her husband's death two years ago. Experts tell *Metrolife* that warning signs include persistent sadness, worsening functioning, and growing hopelessness.

"Grief comes in waves, with brief moments of relief. Depression is different — sadness becomes persistent, pervasive, and no longer linked to reminders of the loss," says Neha Cadabam, senior psychologist and executive director at a private hospital. "When grief stops fluctuating and feels static and overwhelming, it may be shifting toward depression," she adds.

Spousal loss can be especially destabilising, altering daily life, identity, and emotional security at once. "In such instances, 'we' becomes 'I'," says clinical psychologist Dr Shilpi Saraswat. Neha adds that risk rises further with triggers like financial stress, social withdrawal, or caregiving exhaustion.

Warning signs

Rehabilitation psychologist Nithya J Rao says a key red flag is when pain "affects everything" and turns into harsh self-beliefs such as "I am defective, unlovable, or a burden", carrying out even basic tasks feel impossible. Families should watch for major shifts from the person's usual coping pattern, she adds.

Mental health experts say isolation deepens grief, and healing needs community care.

Warning signs can also be subtle, such as emotional flatness, irritability, loss of humour, withdrawal, fatigue, and emotional distance, which are often dismissed as "just grief", says Neha.

Experts caution that "some people process grief quietly". "Constant busyness or forced cheerfulness may be emotional avoidance. Changes in sleep (persistent insomnia or oversleeping), appetite and weight changes, neglect of personal care, and abandoning routines for weeks should not be ignored," Neha says.

Shilpi flags recurrent thoughts about guilt, "especially being stuck on what one did not do for the deceased", as a sign to seek grief counselling.

Time for grief

Experts caution against treating grief like a countdown. "Concern arises when distress persists for months without easing, or when one's ability to carry out daily activities keeps deteriorating rather than stabilising," says Neha.

They warn that depression may not look dramatic. "High-functioning depression is often missed because productivity is mistaken for resilience," says Neha.

Helpful responses

Isolation can intensify grief, leaving those who live alone or lack support more vulnerable, says Neha. Nithya stresses that healing needs "community care and support".

Repeated talk about wanting relief from pain, fixation on death, giving away possessions, or sudden calm after intense distress are signs to look for, experts say. Support should begin with validation, not advice. Statements like 'don't cry', 'time heals everything', 'everything happens for a reason', or 'be strong' can feel invalidating, they point out.

Neha suggests starting gently: "When you say 'I've noticed you seem overwhelmed lately and I care about how you are coping', it opens dialogue without judgement." Nithya recommends sharing stories of the deceased to keep the bereaved engaged.

POPCORN

Way to gau

A project funded by Madhya Pradesh to study a potential cure for cancer with cow urine, cow dung and milk has run into controversy. Turns out the Rs 3.5 crore granted for the research at a university in Jabalpur wasn't put to proper use. An earlier project to find the mythical jadibooti Sanjeevani, the herb that revives Lakshmana in the Ramayana, had similarly run aground. A lot of public money was spent, and the jadi was elusive, but you can be sure someone found the booty.

EVENTS

Classical music concert
Sapthak Bangalore will present the Pt Kerekai Kamalakar Bhat Memorial Concert featuring Kiran Kamalakar Bhat (on vocals), Arun Kamalakar Bhat (tabla), Madhusoodhan Bhat (harmonium), Rutuja Lad (vocal), Vighnesh Kamath (tabla) and Tejas Ravindra Katoti (harmonium), on January 18, 5.30 pm, at Seva Sadan, Malleswaram. Entry free. For details, contact 95355 11888.

Community event
Hasiru Hejje Swaccha Usiru Collective along with the Kumbalgodu Gram Panchayat is organising the Hasiru Habba: 'Kasa=Kasu', on January 17, 10 am onwards, at Anchepalya Government School, Nelamangala. The initiative allows people to exchange plastic bottles and polythene bags for Kasa points, which can be redeemed for shopping coupons. Entry free.

Kannada play
Story Telling Disease (STD) will stage the 90-minute Kannada play 'Jana Enanthaare?' written and directed by Chandan Kumar, featuring Chandan Kumar, Srinath, Girish Prakash, Sushma, Raj and Raksha, on January 17, 7.30 pm, at Dr C Ashwath Kalabhavana, N R Colony. Tickets online. For details, contact 98864 65852.

Urban Arts Commission may come back to life

SHRADDHA A K
TEAM METROLIFE

The government is open to reconstituting the Bangalore Urban Arts Commission, established in 1976, to safeguard the city's aesthetics and built heritage. The Commission was disbanded in 2002.

Shalini Rajaneesh, additional chief secretary, government of Karnataka, was part of a panel that discussed the city's efforts to engage with its spaces through the spirit of art. She responded positively to the suggestion that the city needed such a commission to preserve its heritage.

The discussion was part of the inauguration of an art festival hosted by ArtMantram. The festival opened on Thursday at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Vasanth Nagar, and is on till January 25, across multiple locations.

Yumna Hari Singh, president of ArtMantram, urged the government to reconstitute the commission. The commission's role is to advise on urban aesthetics, public art, and heritage integration in Bengaluru's planning and development processes.

In another session, artists Isabelita Virtual and Karin Fyhrie joined industry professionals Divya Tak and Ganesaraman Kalyanasundaram to discuss generative AI's potential as a creative tool. Divya noted that the human touch could significantly enhance creative output, while Kalyanasundaram emphasised that AI should augment and not replace human creativity. The session was moderated by Yumna.

(From left) Subheer Hari Singh, Jija Madhavan Hari Singh, Sudhakar Rao, Shalini Rajneesh, Maheshwar Rao, and Priyanka Francis at the inauguration of ArtMantram's festival on Thursday.

M Maheshwar Rao (chief commissioner, GBA), Sudhakar Rao (former chief secretary, government of Karnataka), and Priyanka Mary Francis (director of NGMA) were part of the inaugural panel.

Another session on ecology and mental health featured Dr Vivek Benegal, Nimhans, Anita Reddy, founder of NGO Dwaraka, and architect Naresh Narasimhan.

Narasimhan pointed out that better-designed spaces lead to improved behaviour among people, noting that aesthetically pleasing areas tend to be better maintained, as evidenced by discussions with pourakarmikas.

Another session discussed conservation and cultural spaces, and featured Priya Chetty-Rajgopal, founder, Heritage Beku, and activist-artist Gayathri Shetty. It was moderated by Jyothi Gupta from Christ (deemed to be) University.

ArtMantram is a non-profit trust established by Yumna, in 2000.

WHAT'S COMING UP

Jan 17: The festival moves to Cubbon Park with Morning Ragas, a children's painting competition, live painting by artists, and folk dance performances.

Jan 18: Soft launch of Drishyam Arts Village, Kanakapura.

Events continue till Jan 25. For schedules, visit check their website: artmantram.org

Play about Roerichs now in translation

A play on the legendary painter Swetoslav Roerich and Devika Rani, originally written in Kannada, is now out in English and Hindi translation.

Dr Rekha Kowshik has translated the book into English ('Admirers of Colours'), and Dr Shakira Khanum into Hindi ('Rangonk ke Upasak'). Dr Nataraj Talaghattapura, who wrote the Kannada play 'Banna Mechidavaru', says, "Even if you search for Roerich on the Internet, you won't find much substantial written information about him, just small snippets. However, since our families were acquainted and I had the opportunity to meet him a couple of times, I decided to share his story." All three are published by Varshanidhi Prakashana, Bengaluru, and priced at Rs 100. The Roerichs were known across the world — Swetoslav for his painting and Devika Rani for her pioneering work as an actor in Indian cinema.

Pro tennis player raises awareness through rap

The Bengaluru athlete uses his social media page to draw attention to important topics like women's safety and mental health

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
TEAM METROLIFE

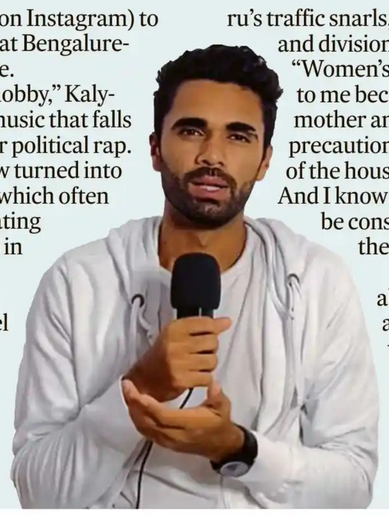
A 25-year-old professional tennis player is making an impact off the tennis courts through his music. Bengaluru-based Adil Kalyanpur, who has been playing since he was 5, uses his social media page (@adil.kalyanpur on Instagram) to highlight issues that Bengalureans commonly face.

"It started as a hobby," Kalyanpur says of his music that falls under conscious or political rap. The hobby has now turned into a passion project, which often sees him collaborating with other artistes in the city.

Kalyanpur, who trained with Rafael Nadal at the latter's academy in Spain, raps about issues such as women's safety, Bengaluru's traffic snarls, Bengaluru's floods, and division caused by religion.

"Women's safety is important to me because I have seen my mother and sister taking extra precautions while stepping out of the house or while travelling. And I know what it feels like to be constantly worried about their safety," he explains.

In one song, he talks about the life of an athlete and being on tour. "It's a lonely journey, especially in individual sport. Through the song, I wanted to tell fellow athletes that they are not alone," says Kalyanpur.



Adil Kalyanpur has been making music since 2020.

His writing process is "fairly straightforward". Sometimes a random thought strikes him and he writes two to three songs in one shot. Other times, he goes without writing for two weeks. He spends five to six hours a week on his music, usually during the evenings when he is not travelling, or if he is on tour, while waiting at airports.

Mental health, something he has grappled with in the past, is another important topic he tackles through his music. In a song, posted on World Mental Health Day (October 10), he raps, 'Dear brothers, it's okay to cry, it's okay to be sad, it's okay to feel certain emotions, you're not a weak man'.

He started posting his music in 2020 and even created a profile on Spotify which has a few of his songs. "A couple of record labels too reached out to me, but it did not work out for various reasons," he recalls.

He currently has over 30,000 followers and is focused on raising awareness. "Whatever money I make as a content creator is donated to charity," he shares.

Currently, at 268 in the ATP world rankings (doubles), Kalyanpur, whose focus is on the doubles format of tennis, hopes to play as many Grand Slams as possible this year. He also hopes to dedicate more time to his sports centre, Racketeers, located in Whitefield.

90-year-old writes satirical book on current events

A 90-year-old Bengalurean has written a book offering his humorous take on current events and his personal memories. Titled 'My House Is My Castle', the book by T L Raghavan features over 30 articles originally published in his blog. He has authored 14 books thus far.

In his latest book, Raghavan, a Karnataka Shree awardee and a former Tamil Nadu state-level badminton champion, brings an element of nostalgia through topics ranging from sport and space missions to his travels.

In one article he talks about astronaut Sunita Williams' unexpected 286-day stay in space, which made global headlines. "No one talks about it anymore. In the book I offer a humorous and satirical take on the whole episode. And imagine what it would be like to be in her position," he shares.

T L Raghavan

Reflecting on cricket team Royal Challengers Bangalore's tragic victory parade, he writes that the stadium should erect a memorial on its premises bearing the names of the fans who died. "Writing is a better reflection of personality than speaking. And as you grow older, memories are what keep you going," he notes.

'My House Is My Castle' is available online.

Mubassina bags long jump gold

MANGALURU, DHNS: Mubassina Muhammed's, the 19-year-old from Lakshwadeep, took the women's long jump gold comfortably in the 85th all-India inter-university athletics championships at the Swarajya Stadium, Moodubidiri, with an effort of 6.15m.

"I came here thinking I'd break A Sherin's 6.32m meet record here, but I had a foul," said Mubassina who was representing SRM University here.

While Mubassina was attempting to break the record, three young men – Kuldeep Yadav, S Kavinraja, Ram Ratan – easily soared over the pole vault meet record (5.00m) with all of them clearing 5.10m. And Gwalior ITM University's Kuldeep, who cleared that height in his first try, took the gold while Periyar University's S Kavinraja got the silver.

Results: **Men: 1500m**: 1. Vikash (Panjab) 3:44.83s, 2. Akash Bhati (MDU, Rohtak) 3:45.06, 3. Yogesh Kumar Dhindwal (Madras) 3:45.07.
110m hurdles: A. Aravinth (Madras) 14.10s, 2. S Shahul (Calicut) 14.20s, 3. K Paari (Madras) 14.47.
Pole vault: 1. Kuldeep Yadav (ITM, Gwalior) 5.10m meet record, old Madras' Gowtham 5.00m; 2. S. Kavinraja (Periyar) 5.10m BMR, 3. Ram Ratan (Guru Kashi) 5.10 BMR.
Javelin throw: 1. Aditya (SRM, Andhra) 74.43m, 2. Mohit (MDU, Rohtak) 73.90, 3. Moh Junaid (Madras) 73.54.
Women: 1500m: 1. Anisha Patel (Dr. Rammanohar Lohia) 4:22.80s, 2. Milal Deepak Bhoyar (Rashtrasant Tukdoji) 4:24.04, 3. Anju (KLU) 4:25.12.
100m hurdles: 1. S. Akschida (Anna, Chennai) 13.75s, 2. Srireshma (Madras) 13.75, 3. K Yamini (Madras) 13.84.
Long jump: 1. Mubassina Mohammed (SRM, Andhra) 6.15m, 2. V.S. Shridevika (Mangalore) 6.06, 3. O Pamila Varshini (Madras) 5.87.
Pole vault: 1 Vanshika Ghanghas (Chandigarh) 3.70m, 2. V Karthika (Madras) 3.70, 3. Nekha Eldho (Calicut) 3.70.
Shot put: 1. V.S. Anupriya (Calicut) 14.53m, 2. Jaskanwal Kaur (Punjabi) 14.50, 3. Sonu Kumari (Bhupal Nobles) 14.44.
Heptathlon: 1. K A Anamika (SRM, Andhra) 5158 pts, 2. Kirti Isharwal (Lovely Professional) 4979, 3. Isha Negi (Kalinga, Bhubaneswar) 4949.

Martin Zubimendi celebrates after scoring Arsenal's third goal against Chelsea. REUTERS

Arsenal take narrow advantage

LONDON, APF: Arsenal ruined Chelsea manager Liam Rosenior's first home game as they moved closer to Wembley with a 3-2 win in the League Cup semifinal first leg on Wednesday.

Rosenior's side had beaten second-tier Charlton 5-1 in his debut in the FA Cup third round last weekend.

But Arsenal ensured his first game on the Stamford Bridge bench was significantly less enjoyable.

Ben White put the Premier League leaders ahead in the first half and Viktor Gyokeres punished a blunder by Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez to score their second after the interval.

Alejandro Garnacho came off the bench to pull one back for Chelsea before Martin Zubimendi grabbed Arsenal's third goal.

Garnacho gave Chelsea a glimmer of hope with his second goal in the closing stages.

But Arsenal will go into the second leg at Emirates Stadium on February 3 as firm favourites to reach the Wembley final in March.

Manchester City won 2-0 at Newcastle in the first leg of the other semifinal on Tuesday.

Arsenal are unbeaten in their last 10 matches in all competitions as they try to win their first trophy since the 2020 FA Cup.

Gunners manager Mikel Arteta had claimed his players were motivated by their 4-0 aggregate defeat against Newcastle in the League Cup semi-finals last season.

They also lost in the semi-finals of the 2025 Champions League, the 2022 League Cup and the 2021 Europa League.

Result: Chelsea: 2 (Garnacho 57th, 83rd) lt to Arsenal: 3 (White 7th, Gyokeres 49th, Zubimendi 71st).

CRICKET VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY

Defending champions stumble in semifinals

Mokhade ton seals Karnataka fate against Vidarbha

Vidarbha's Aman Mokhade celebrates after scoring a century against Karnataka during the Vijay Hazare Trophy semifinal in Bengaluru on Thursday. DH PHOTO/ PRASHANTH HG

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Vidarbha have found Karnataka to be an unshakable force in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, having lost all their four previous encounters, including last season's final. For the reigning Ranji Trophy champions to break that streak, someone had to deliver a standout performance.

Talented youngster Aman Mokhade, Vidarbha's best batter this season, did so by smashing a scintillating century to send them soaring into the final with a six-wicket victory here on Thursday.

The 24-year-old Mokhade scored a measured 138 off 122 balls (12x4, 2x6) — his fifth century of this VHT — to anchor a tricky target of 281 to perfection in the company of former Karnataka player R Samarth (76 not out, 69b) — the duo forging a 147-run stand for third wicket — at the BCCI Centre's of Excellence. Vidarbha will take on the winners of Friday's semifinal between Saurashtra and Punjab in the title clash at the same venue on Sunday.

From the time Mokhade strode out to the crease, along with his opening partner Atharva Taide, he seemed to have a plan in place against the defending champions. Initially, when pacers Vidwath Kaverappa and Abhilash Shetty were making the new ball talk, Mokhade embraced caution, hardly perturbed by the slow goings.

He knew once he saw them off and the pitch settled in, runs were there for the taking. Things became easier for Vidarbha when first-change pacer Vyshak Vijaykumar was replaced by Manvath Kumar as a concussion substitute after bowling just four overs. Vyshak was hit on the head in the final over of Karnataka's innings.

Brick by brick, Mokhade built his innings. The early circumspection gave way to a flurry of boundaries midway, the momentum never dipping for once as he and Samarth knocked the stuffing out of Karnataka bowlers who looked flat and bereft of ideas during the carnage that unfolded.

Karnataka, despite a promising campaign, have only themselves to blame for fluffing the lines. Vidarbha's opening pacers, Yash Thakur and Nachiket Bhule, bowled tight lines to keep Karnataka's in-form opening pair of Mayank Agarwal and Devdutt Padikkal on a tight leash. And both Thakur and Bhule got rewards for their efforts, with the latter trapping Agarwal lbw in the fourth over and the former having Padikkal caught in the seventh over.

It was the first time in nine matches both the Karnataka openers were dismissed cheaply together, putting out-of-form middle-order in play.

However vice-captain Karun Nair (76), who found his touch in the quarterfinal defeat of Mumbai, was up for the challenge, bolstering Karnataka's innings with a 113-run fourth-wicket partnership in the company of under-fire wicketkeeper KL Shrijith (54).

The lower-order offered a fight to take Karnataka to a competitive total.

Brief scores: Karnataka: 280 all out in 49.4 overs (Karun Nair 76, Dhruv Prabhakar 28, KL Shrijith 54, Shreyas Gopal 36, Abhinav Manohar 26; Yash Thakur 2-64, Darshan Nalkande 5-48) lt to Vidarbha: 284/4 in 46.2 overs (Aman Mokhade 138, Dhruv Shorey 47, R Samarth 76 n.o.; Abhilash Shetty 3-48) by 6 wkts. **PoM:** Aman Mokhade.

Djokovic on collison course with Sinner

Serbian will face Bengaluru Open champ Martinez first

Jannik Sinner

MELBOURNE, AFP

Jannik Sinner was drawn Thursday against France's Hugo Gaston to start his Australian Open defence and is on a collision course to meet 10-time champion Novak Djokovic in a blockbuster semifinal.

World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz opens against home hope Adam Walton in his bid for a career Grand Slam and first Melbourne Park title.

The Spanish superstar is on the same side of the draw as last year's beaten finalist Alexander Zverev, and is scheduled to meet him in the last four.

Italy's Sinner saw off Germany's Zverev in straight sets in last year's final.

If the 24-year-old makes it three in a row he would join Djokovic as the only men in the Open era to do so

The Serbian great is aiming for a record 25th major title and will meet 71st-ranked Spaniard and Bengaluru Open champion Pedro Martinez first up.

"The draw is very difficult, it doesn't matter who you play," said Sinner at the draw ceremony.

"We are the best players in the world and the way is very, very long and very far. We will go day-by-day."

World number three Zverev faces big-serving Gabriel Diallo in round one.

In the women's draw, American defending champion Madison Keys will take on Ukraine's Oleksandra Oliynykova while world number one Aryna Sabalenka kicks off against French wildcard Tiantosa Rakotomanga Rajaonah.

Keys stunned then title-holder Sabalenka 12 months ago in a classic three-set final to win her first major title aged 29.

'Bird droppings' lower India Open standards

"Bird droppings" forced two stoppages during the men's singles second-round match between HS Prannoy and Singapore's Loh Kean Yew at the India Open Super 750 here on Thursday, compounding a growing list of organisational concerns at the tournament, reports PTI from New Delhi.

The unusual interruptions occurred on the third day of the event at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, already under scrutiny following complaints related to playing conditions, air quality, extreme cold and other unfortunate events.

Prannoy's match against Loh was first halted when the Indian was leading 16-14 in the opening game. It was stopped again early in the decider, with Prannoy ahead 1-0.

On both occasions, tournament officials entered Court 1, the main television court, to clean the playing surface after what appeared to be bird droppings fell from the ceiling.

"It was bird s**t that kind of halted the game," Prannoy said after his 21-18, 19-21, 14-21 loss.

Loh, the 2021 world champion, did not speak about the interruptions but spoke about pollution being an issue.

"The weather is not good. My health dropped quite a bit. I breathe less. I wear my mask when I can. I stay indoors as much as possible, but that's the only thing that I can do," he said.

BWF reviews

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) said it has reviewed the facilities at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex and asserted that the venue meets all requirements for staging the World Championships in August.

"The BWF has engaged with players and teams during the India Open 2026 to review conditions at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex in New Delhi," the world body said in the statement. "The feedback received — both positive and constructive — is invaluable in shaping the best possible environment for this tournament and future championships. We also acknowledge the comments shared by players and the subsequent media coverage."

Lakshya enters quarters amid flurry of Indian exits

NEW DELHI, PTI

Former champion Lakshya Sen produced a composed and tactical performance to progress to the quarterfinals of the USD 950,000 India Open Super 750 badminton tournament but Kidambi Srikanth and H S Prannoy bowed out after a spirited show here on Thursday.

The top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, one of the favourites to win the title, also exited after a heartbreaking 27-25, 21-23, 19-21 loss to Japan's Hiroki Midorikawa and Kyohei Yamashita in the second round later in the day.

Sen, a 2021 world championships bronze medallist, showed resilience and maturity to overcame Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-19, 21-11 in the second round to emerge as the only Indian challenge in singles at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

"At the start of the opening game I was struggling with my rhythm a bit and was lifting short and that allowed him to attack more. But then I started lifting the shuttle longer and focused on defending well and I think that turned the first game," Lakshya told reporters.

"In the second game, I knew I could not give him the opportunity to keep playing his game, so mixed my speed and it worked."

Lakshya Sen dives for a return during his second-round victory over Japan's Kenta Nishimoto at the Indian Open in New Delhi on Thursday. REUTERS

The 24-year-old Almora man will next face Chinese Taipei's Lin Chun-Yi, who defeated Ireland's Nhat Nguyen 21-16, 21-17.

Earlier, Srikanth fought hard but went down 21-14, 17-21, 21-17 to France's Christo Popov, the reigning World Tour Finals champion.

Prannoy also pushed his opponent close before losing 18-21, 21-19, 21-14 to eighth seed Loh Kean Yew of Singapore.

Malvika Bansod also went down 18-21 15-21 to China's fifth seed Han Yue in a women's singles match.

India's challenge in women's doubles also ended when Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost 22-20 22-24 21-23 against seventh seeds Li Yijing and Luo Xumin of China in a marathon match that lasted 84 minutes.

Sen struggled initially with timing and depth, allowing Nishimoto to seize control and open up a 16-11 lead at the mid-game interval.

Down 14-18, Sen showed great composure as he extended the rallies, retrieving fiercely, and forced errors from his opponent.

A run of five consecutive points swung the momentum decisively, enabling Sen to close out the game.

Little-known Smith turns millionaire after Sinner triumph

MELBOURNE, AP: A little-known local amateur player beat Jannik Sinner and went on to make himself a millionaire in Australian dollars after winning the 1 Point Slam on Wednesday at the Australian Open's pre-tournament event.

It was a life-changing day for Jordan Smith (**in pic**) in the Rod Laver Arena, with the event including top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz.

All the matches lasted just one single point in a knockout bracket that included men and women, professionals and amateurs, plus celebrities like Taiwanese pop star Jay Chou, who was knocked out without hitting the ball after an ace from Petar Jovic.

Smith emerged in triumph from a state qualifying event to get the winner-take-all prize of 1 million Australian dollars, or around $670,000.

The Australian won on the third stroke of the final when Joanna Garland, the women's No. 117 from Taiwan, sent a two-handed backhand wide.

Garland had service which was decided by playing rock, paper, scissors. Not that serving was always an advantage.

Sinner lost his third-round point against Smith, by netting his serve. So did Coco Gauff against Donna Vekic while Frances Tiafoe sent his serve to Iga Swiatek too long — mishaps that provoked giggles and laughs from the players involved.

Garland lost in Australian Open qualifying this week yet surged through the 1-Point Slam bracket beating Alexander Zverev and Nick Kyrgios, plus Maria Sakkari and Vekic. Sakkari had eliminated Alcaraz.

'Career Slam at 22 would be crazy'

MELBOURNE, AFP: Roger Federer said on Thursday that Carlos Alcaraz winning the Australian Open to complete the career Grand Slam aged just 22 would be "crazy".

Spain's Alcaraz already has six major titles and should the world No. 1 snap his Australia drought, he would become the youngest man to seal a career Grand Slam.

"At his young age to be able to complete the career Grand Slam already would be crazy," 44-year-old Swiss legend Federer said at Melbourne Park on Thursday.

Albacete shock for sloppy Madrid

MADRID, AFP

Javi Villar celebrates after Albacete's 3-2 victory over Real Madrid in Albacete on Wednesday night. REUTERS

Real Madrid fell to a shock 3-2 defeat in the Copa del Rey last 16 on Wednesday as Alvaro Arbeloa's debut as coach ended in humiliation by second-tier opposition.

Appointed on Monday to replace Xabi Alonso, Arbeloa and his side were ousted by Jefte Betancor's stoppage-time winner at the Carlos Belmonte stadium.

Without French superstar Kylian Mbappe and various other key players, Arbeloa's side struggled against a side currently 17th in Spain's second division.

Albacete took the lead through Javi Villar but Franco Mastantuono equalised just before half-time.

Jefte put the hosts back ahead after 82 minutes and then scored the winner after Gonzalo Garcia's 91st-minute goal looked to have forced extra time for the 15-time European champions.

After Madrid lost the Spanish Super Cup final on Sunday against rivals Barcelona, president Florentino Perez replaced Alonso with reserve team coach Arbeloa. The Spaniard selected two players currently playing in the reserves he led until Monday -- holding midfielder Jorge Cestero and right-back David Jimenez.

As well as Mbappe he left out players including goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and Jude Bellingham, to rest ahead of the return to La Liga action on Saturday against Levante.

The first half was mostly played under heavy gloom, not just Madrid's mood but an intense fog which set in a few minutes into the game.

Vinicius Junior smashed high and wide from long range as neither side produced any clear chances until shortly before half-time when the hosts took a shock lead.

Villar escaped Mastantuono's attentions at a corner and nodded Albacete in front after 42 minutes.

Arbeloa's side levelled before the break through, also capitalising on a corner, with Mastantuono turning home from close range.

Results: Albacete: 3 (Villar 42nd, Betancor 82nd, 90th+4) bt Real Madrid: 2 (Mastantuono 45th+3, G Garcia 90th+1), Real Betis: 2 (Avila 68th, 80th) bt Elche: 1 (Petrot 58th), Deportivo Alaves: 2 (Martinez 49th, Vicente 89th).

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
KNNL, HBC Divn., Athani - 591304, Tq: Athani. Dist: Belgaum

No. : K.N.N.L./HBC/PB/TND/2025-26/3352 Date : 06-01-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through E-Procurement only)

Percentage Tenders are invited KW-3 Basis in Two Cover System for below Mentioned Work from Eligible Tenderers, for the Works detailed below by the undersigned. On behalf of the **Managing Director, KNNL, Bengaluru, the Executive Engineer, K.N.N.L., HBC Division. Athani,** invites percentage basis tender from interested, Experienced and resourceful Civil Contractors from KPWD Class-II Contractors who fulfill the Pre-qualification criteria for the bellow mentioned work.

The Two Cover Bid Submission Procedure as per Rule 28 of KTPP Act shall be followed The Bidders are requested to Submit their Bids in Two Cover System including EMD in E-cash. The First Cover (Technical Bid) should Contain the Documents as Mentioned below. The Second Cover shall contain the Financial Bid. The Cover-I (Technical Bid) will be Opened First. Thereafter Cover-II (Financial Bid) of only those bidders who have fulfill the conditions contained will be opened.

The blank tender documents can be obtained through **Website : https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and can be submitted through electronic tender only.

The Approximate Estimated Cost of Work is 1) Rs. 78.31 Lakhs.

1) The Contractor can Request for E-tendering Documents From : 16-01-2026 @ 10.30 a.m. to 22-01-2026 upto 4.00 p.m., 2) Last Date & Time for Tender Queries : 21-01-2026 upto 4.00 p.m., 3) Submission of Completed E-tendering Document From : 16-01-2026 @ 10.30 a.m. to 22-01-2026 upto 4.00 p.m., 4) Opening of Technical Bid at E.E. K.N.N.L., HBC Division, Athani : 27-01-2026 @ 11.00 a.m., 5) Opening of Financial Bid at E.E. K.N.N.L., HBC Division, Athani : 29-01-2026 @ 11.00 a.m. or After approval of Technical Bid.

Any other information can be had from the undersigned during the Office hours on **Telephone : 08289 - 251034 & H.P Company Helpline : 080-22485867.**

DIPR/Belagavi/1631/Manipal/2025-26

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
K.N.N.L., HBC, Division, Athani.**

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521

No. CGM(Tech)/DGM(Proc& APCC)/EE-P/AEE-2/2025-26/5448-455 Date: 14.01.2026

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION (RE-TENDER)
(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited re-invites Bids on electronic mode against the following Tender Enquiry No. as detailed below:

Tender Enquiry Number and Description
1) Tender Enquiry No: KPTCL/2025-26/ IND0268. Design, manufacture, testing, supply and installation / demonstration of **01 set of Insulated Aerial Work Platform mounted on a vehicle and Insulated Scaffolding System** along with Sky Ladder vehicle, Tools Transportation vehicle and other Hotline tools (Total: 138 items) for live maintenance of Transmission Lines & Substations upto 400kV voltage class required at Hotline Sub-division, KPTCL, Shivamogga conforming to KPTCL technical specification along with **Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for a period of five (05) years.**

The bids will be received through e-procurement portal only. The details regarding the subject enquiry in the e-procurement portal can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **"E Procurement KPTCL" or https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 22.01.2026 @ 15:00hrs** and the last date & time for receipt of bids in e-portal is **21.02.2026 @ 15:00hrs.**

Any extensions of due date for bid submission will be intimated in the e-procurement portal. Any details required in this regard can also be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

All Corrigendum /Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the bids.

**Sd/- Chief General Manager (Tech),
KPTCL, Corporate Office, 2nd Floor, Kaveri Bhavan,
Bengaluru – 560 009**

Bangladesh board sacks Najmul after players revolt

DHAKA, PTI: The Bangladesh Cricket Board was forced to sack its finance committee chairman Najmul Islam on Thursday after senior players of the national team revolted against him for making derogatory comments against them.

Toss was delayed in Thursday's Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) game between Naokhali Express and Chattogram Royals here after neither of the two teams showed up at the venue and players of both teams were unified in their demand for immediate removal of Najmul.

Najmul. X

Under player and public pressure, BCB was forced to act and removed Najmul as chairman of the board's finance committee. It is unclear if he remains a BCB director.

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) wishes to inform that, following a review of recent developments and in the best interest of the organisation, the BCB President has decided to release Mr Najmul Islam from his responsibilities as Chairman of the Finance Committee with immediate effect," said the BCB in a statement.

"Until further notice, the BCB President will assume the role of Acting Chairman of the Finance Committee. The BCB reiterates that the interests of the cricketers remain its highest priority. The Board remains fully committed to upholding the honour and dignity of all players under its jurisdiction," it added.

After being shuffled up and down the order, K L Rahul appears to have found comfort at No. 5 in ODIs. PTI

CRICKET

Rahul's evolution as middle-order maestro

The two innings against NZ underline range of right-hander's game

MADHU JAWALI
BENGALURU, DHNS

On Sunday in Vadodara, during the opening ODI against New Zealand, K L Rahul walked in at No. 6 with India suddenly under pressure. Three wickets had fallen in quick succession in what had appeared like a simple chase while Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer were at the crease.

For a few overs, tension hung in the air, but Rahul remained ice-cool and finished the job with minimal fuss.

Three days later in Rajkot, the script was familiar. This time, Rahul was sent in at No. 5 with India struggling at 118 for 4 before the halfway stage of their innings while setting a target. The circumstances were not very different from those in Vadodara in terms of pressure, and once again, the 33-year-old went about his rescue act with trademark calm.

His fluent 112 not out (92 balls, 11x4, 1x6) pulled India out of serious trouble and helped the hosts post a defendable 284. Although Daryl Mitchell's superb 132 not out under pressure ultimately overshadowed Rahul's eighth ODI hundred, his first since the 2023 World Cup, the transformation of the Karnataka batter into a dependable middle-order player has been one of the major takeaways in recent years.

An opener in his early years, Rahul has been moved around the batting order, often without much clarity. Yet he now appears to have found both purpose and comfort at No. 5, as the numbers show. He has played the most at that position, scored the most runs, averages the highest, strikes at the best rate and has more hundreds and fifties there than anywhere else.

RAHUL IN DIFFERENT POSITIONS

Position	Matches	Runs	High score	Average	SR	100s	50s
1st	16	669	111	47.78	78.61	2	5
2nd	7	246	102	35.14	82.82	1	1
3rd	3	77	47	25.66	78.57	0	0
4th	13	558	111*	55.80	86.78	2	3
5th	33	1477	112*	64.21	99.59	3	10
6th	12	332	60	47.42	99.10	0	1
7th	1	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0

"Number five, number six, honestly, I think, has helped me understand my batting a lot more," Rahul said after the first ODI. "It's a completely different challenge. I walk in at a stage like that where you need to hit a boundary, probably from ball one. And there's so much pressure, and there are five fielders outside.

"When you're opening the batting, you don't see fielders at all. Everyone's right next to you. So it's much easier batting there. This (batting at No. 5 or 6) is a lot more pressure; one mistake, and you can be on the losing side, and all the blame comes on you. But it's been exciting."

Batting in the middle order is no easy task. It demands flexibility, game awareness and the ability to adapt to constantly changing situations. In both innings against New Zealand, Rahul showcased those qualities while making the job appear deceptively simple.

In the first ODI, the chase looked routine, something Rahul himself acknowledged later. However, any misstep could have exposed a fragile Indian tail, especially with Washington Sundar carrying an injury. Rahul had to keep the required rate under control without taking unnecessary risks and he did so with ease.

In the second match, the challenge was different. He had to be both the stabiliser and the aggressor, and he handled both roles effortlessly against a disciplined New Zealand attack on what seemed to be a sluggish surface.

Results may not always fall in his favour, but Rahul currently looks in complete command of his craft. Much of that, he suggests, comes from a positive headspace away from the game. Becoming a parent may have also given him a renewed sense of purpose and responsibility, something that has clearly translated into his cricket.

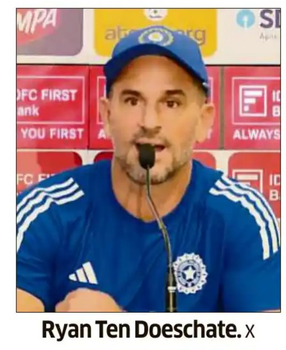
"I've been that kind of an individual where if I'm happy outside the field, if I'm excited to come onto the field and play cricket, that's the best kind of zone for me to be in," he said when asked pointedly. "And that's something that I've realised as I've grown a bit older. Yeah, and I'm just always looking forward to playing cricket."

Despite being one of the most sought-after names in the Indian Premier League, Rahul has been out of India's T20 plans for some time. His last T20I appearance was on November 10, 2022, in the T20 World Cup semifinal against England in Adelaide. Strangely, that omission has worked in his favour. It has allowed him to reassess his game, set clear priorities and devote time to his fitness.

"There wasn't much time away from the game where I could sit down and think about, okay, 'what is it that I need to improve as a player?' Focus on my fitness as well because I've had a lot of injuries. So yeah, that's (being out of T20Is) given me some time to get away from the game, sit back, enjoy my family time as well. Work on my game," he said.

"You know, I play an ODI series, then a couple of months later, I play a Test match in England with a swinging ball. And you have to go to Australia, work on quick bounce and leaving the ball. So, I think at this stage in my life and career, I find that really exciting, and it keeps my feet grounded. And yeah, just going with everything that's coming, you know, success, failure. I think it's that kind of mindset that helps me perform well."

It was in Rajkot, back in January 2020, that Rahul was first tried at No. 5 against Australia after Rishabh Pant was ruled out with a concussion. He responded with a match-winning 80 off 52 balls and was named player of the match. Six years later, in a happy coincidence, Rahul returned to the same venue as India's first-choice wicket-keeper-batter and came close to producing a repeat winning performance.



Ryan Ten Doeschate. X

T20 WC on back-burner for few days: Ten Doeschate

RAJKOT, PTI: Indian assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate says the next month's T20 World Cup is still a "long way" to go and the team's immediate focus on the ongoing ODI series against New Zealand, which is tied 1-1 after the visitors won the second match here.

The defending champions India will co-host the 20-team T20 World Cup starting on February 7, while they are in the middle of a high intensity ODI series with the series-decider slated in Indore on Sunday.

"There's a real chance that you're so focused on the World Cup that you think, 'oh, these three games this week just comes and goes' and we don't learn anything and we don't put our best foot (forward), or we don't put our best performances out there," he said after India lost the second ODI by seven wickets.

"Strategy (wise), I can't see anything that we've had to skirt around in terms of prepping for the (T20) World Cup. We are fully focused on this series. Every series is important. Individually for these players, there's a lot at stake."

Soorma register first win in HIL

RANCHI, PTI: JSW Soorma Hockey Club registered their first victory in the Men's Hockey India League 2026 as they beat HIL Governing Council 3-1 here on Thursday.

A brace by captain Harmanpreet Singh (15th, 38th) and a goal by Gurjant Singh (27th) saw their team through. Meanwhile, Kane Russell scored the lone goal for HIL GC, equalling Tom Boon's total of 10 goals as top scorers in the league so far.

Despite the loss, HIL GC continue to remain in the top two of the points table.

Soorma's dominance began as early as the first quarter when they managed a PC with just 33 seconds left for the first hooter. With world's most fierce dragflicker Harmanpreet Singh in their ranks, it was no surprise that the PC was converted with ease.

Neeraj starts training after Ministry's MOC approval

NEW DELHI, PTI: Two-time Olympic medal-winning Indian javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has begun his pre-season training in his preferred South African base of Potchefstroom after the Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) approved a 32-day camp for him under new coach Jai Chaudhary.

Chopra parted ways with Czech legend Jan Zelezny as his coach last week, deciding to partner with Chaudhary, who was his formative coach and trains javelin throwers in Panipat, which is the superstar's home town.

The 28-year-old will stay in Potchefstroom, a major training base for javelin throwers from across the world, till February 5 and the total sanctioned government assistance for him stands at Rs 11.80 lakh, a source in the Sports Authority of India (SAI) told PTI.

Mission Olympic Cell, which decides on the financial and logistical assistance to elite athletes in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), met here on Wednesday.

Chopra's support team at the training camp also includes his long-time physiotherapist Ishaan Marwaha.

ISL clubs fret over veto power; AFC grants exemption

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

While the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) granted Indian Super League clubs indirect slots for its continental competition next season, the fixtures for the season may be delayed beyond this weekend as the clubs have shown their concern about the veto power lying with the All India Football Federation within the league's governing council.

When the clubs met virtually with the AIFF on Wednesday to discuss the league schedule for the truncated season — to be held from February 14 to May 17 — they were told a committee would be formed to decide the 21-year roadmap to run the league. The committee will include the governing council and a separate management committee.

The council will comprise five chief operating officers from the clubs, along with members from commercial and marketing partners, and AIFF. In the event of any disagreement over any decision, the AIFF top brass can exercise the veto to overturn it.

The clubs, however, have expressed concern over the veto power staying with the AIFF, saying that the federation can't have it for any football-related decision.

An AIFF official confirmed *DH* that clubs had been requested to send their queries regarding their concerns in detail, and the federation would look to sort it out within two days. The ISL fixtures would only come out after that.

The AFC, meanwhile, has granted a one-season exemption to qualify for Champions League Two next season through playoffs in place of their truncated top-tier season.

The exemption, which was granted after the Indian federation requested the same through a letter on Monday, didn't allow direct entry to the ISL winners — unlike last season — and will have to play the qualifying rounds, along with Super Cup champions FC Goa. Super Cup winners, too, were entitled to a preliminary spot in the past. AFC stated that indirect slots could be awarded if Member associations failed to fulfil the eligibility criteria of 24 matches.

ISL clubs will 13 matches in league and have played at least three matches in Super Cup, except Odisha FC.

Visa delays for England's Rashid, Ahmed

LONDON, PTI: England's T20 World Cup preparations have been disrupted with the Indian government yet to issue visas to spinners Adil Rashid and Rehan Ahmed, according to a report.

The delay means both players, who have Pakistani heritage, are unlikely to travel with the rest of the squad this weekend for the six white-ball matches (three ODIs and three T20Is) against Sri Lanka, and it remains unclear when they will join their teammates, The Guardian reported.

Rashid is currently playing in the SA20, while Ahmed is in Australia for the Big Bash League, and it is hoped they will be able to fly directly from those locations once their visas are cleared.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has been assured there is no objection to their applications and has sought assistance from the UK government to expedite the process, though the report added that the timing remains uncertain.

With Rashid and Ahmed currently unavailable, Liam Dawson is the squad's only specialist spinner, meaning Will Jacks and Jacob Bethell may be required to bowl more than initially planned.

Giants seek revival vs RCB

Mandhana's Royal Challengers enjoy 3-2 edge over Gujarat in last five outings

NAVI MUMBAI, PTI

Hoping to arrest their recent slide, Gujarat Giants have a tough task at hand when they take on table-toppers Royal Challengers Bengaluru in their Women's Premier League clash here on Friday.

After briefly leading the six-team standings, Giants have slipped to third following their defeat to Mumbai Indians on Tuesday, while former champions RCB have surged to the top with back-to-back wins.

RCB, on the other hand, have grown in strength with every outing, the latest being a commanding chase of 144 against UP Warriorz in under 13 overs.

The biggest positive for them was skipper Smriti Mandhana's return to form. Mandhana anchored the chase with her trademark elegance and calm, while her opening partner Grace Harris was at her explosive best.

Gujarat will need to find a way to contain RCB's formidable batting line-up, which also features in-form Nadine de Klerk.

RCBs Grace Harris will eye another batting show after smashing a quick-fire 85 in her last outing. PTI

Hours after injury, Harleen plays statement knock in UPW win

NAVI MUMBAI, PTI: Harleen Deol bounced back from the disappointment of being retired out with a match-winning half-century 24 hours later as UP Warriorz downed defending champions Mumbai Indians by seven wickets for their first victory of WPL 2026 here on Thursday.

Nat-Sciver Brunt (65 off 43 balls) batted with the brute force she is known for to lift MI to 161/5 after a rather ordinary first half of the innings.

Harleen (64 not out off 39), who was retired out on Wednesday despite batting well, proved a point by anchoring UPW's run chase to perfection. It was the first success of the season for UPW in four games while Mumbai Indians suffered their second loss in four matches.

Brief scores: Mumbai Indians: 161/5 in 20 overs (Amanjot Kaur 38, Nat Sciver-Brunt 65, Nicola Carey 32 n.o.) lt to UP Warriorz: 162/3 in 18.1 overs (Meg Lanning 25, Phoebe Litchfield 25, Harleen Deol 64 n.o., Chloe Tryon 27 n.o.; Nat Sciver-Brunt 2-28).
PoM: Harleen Deol.

Pranjala wins bronze medal

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka's Pranjala Shetty won the bronze medal in the Kayak Slalom event at the 12th Junior National Kayak Slalom Championships that concluded in Maheshwar, MP on Thursday.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

U-19 World Cup: England vs Pakistan, Australia vs Ireland, Afghanistan vs South Africa. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 2** & **JioHotstar.**

VHT semifinal: Punjab vs Saurashtra **(1:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **JioHotstar** & **Star Sports Khel.**

WPL: Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Gujarat Giants **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 1** & **JioHotstar.**

HOCKEY

HIL: Ranchi Royals vs JSW Soorma Hockey Club **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 1.**

Henil Patel

Henil grabs five as India win opener

BULAWAYO (ZIMBABWE), PTI

Henil Patel led a ruthless bowling display with an excellent five-wicket haul, setting up India's six-wicket victory over the USA in their rain-hit ICC Under-19 World Cup opener here on Thursday.

The right-arm seamer finished with figures of 5/16 from seven overs with one maiden, ripping through the USA middle-order after India opted to bowl under overcast conditions. The USA were bundled out for a meagre 107 in 35.2 overs.

India's target was revised to 96 in 37 overs after rain interrupted proceedings with the total reading 21 for one in four overs.

Abhigyan Kundu (42 not out off 41 balls) then saw the team home with 118 balls to spare under the DLS method.

India's chase was delayed by rain, but when play resumed, 14-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi (2) fell cheaply as he was bowled by Ritvik Appidi (2/24 in 5 overs) in the third over.

Appidi cramped Suryavanshi for room with a length delivery before the batter came down the wicket only to get an inside edge onto the stumps.

Skipper Ayush Mhatre had by then collected two boundaries and looked confident until rain forced another interruption. India required just 87 runs in 46 overs, but the equation changed with DLS.

Brief scores: USA: 107 all out in 35.2 overs (Nitish Sudini 36; Henil Patel 5-16) lt to India: 99/4 in 17.2 overs (Abhigyan Kundu 42 n.o.; Ritvik Appidi 2/24) by six wickets. **PoM**: Henil Patel; **India's next match**: vs Bangladesh on Saturday.

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